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PUBLISHED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, EUGENE, OREGON

With the Cooperation of the Comparative Literature Section of the Modern Language Association of America

Issued quarterly. Entered as second-class matter, April 5, 1949, at the postoffice at Eugene, Oregon, under act of August 24, 1912.

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The subscription rate is $3.50 a year. The price of single copies is $1.00. Correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to: University of Oregon Publications, Eugene, Oregon. Correspondence concerning exchanges should be addressed to: University of Oregon Library, Eugene, Oregon.

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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

VOLUME IV FALL 1952 NUMBER 4

WALT WHITMAN UND STEFAN GEORGE

H. PONGS

WENN wir von Freiligraths Versproben 1868 und einem Vortrag des Irländers Rolleston über Whitman 1883 absehen, bedeutet das Jahr 1889 den eigentlichen Beginn der Whitman-Wirkung: eine erste Übersetzung der *Grashalme* durch Knorr und Rolleston im Schweizer Verlag Schabelitz; unzureichend und in Auswahl, dennoch begrüßt als die "Bibel der Demokratie" und unmittelbar fortwirkend auf die junge naturalistische Generation, Johannes Schlaf und Arno Holz. Die Wirkung steigert sich mit der Reclamausgabe der *Grashalme* 1907 (durch Joh. Schlaf) bis zur Großausgabe der vortrefflichen Übersetzung Hans Reisigers in zwei Bänden bei Fischer 1922. Die Wirkung geht über die frühen Naturalisten hinweg (Arno Holz als ein "Whitman, der Stil hat"), sie durchflutet die Lyrik der Impressionisten (Paquet, der späte Dehmel), sie begeistert die Expressionisten (Däublers "Nordlicht" reimt Whitman auf Rhythmen; so drückt er seinen Dank aus; Arnim T. Wegners "Antlitz der Städte" stellt Whitman-Verse voran; Werfels Frühwerk lebt von Whitman); sie durchwirkt schließlich die Lyrik der Arbeiterdichter und erreicht in Lerschs "Mensch im Eisen" (1925) eine ebenso barbarische wie eigenschöpferisch-deutsche Vollendung.

Eben zur selben Zeit 1889 bekräftigt George einundzwanzigjährig in Paris sein eingebornes Form- und Kulturbewußtsein an der Meister-

schaft Mallarmés, am Bild- und Wortkult der Symbolisten, er beginnt mit den *Blättern für die Kunst* seine stille, strenge, esoterische Wirkung auf die geistige Jugend, bis zur Aussonderung eines ausgewählten Kreises, die eigne Dichtung steigernd bis zum *Siebenten Ring*, dem *Stern des Bundes*, dem *Neuen Reich* (1928). Das Erlöschen der *Blätter* 1919, die Kraftlosigkeit der George-Epigonen, die Einverwandlung des George-Einflusses in die Geisteswissenschaft, eine Art Literaturforschung des Georgekreises, deutet die der Expansion Whitmans entgegenwirkende Intensivierung des Georgekults an.

Damit nun stehen beide Dichter für entgegengesetzte Weltkräfte, die im gleichen Augenblick in den Schicksalskampf der deutschen Seele eingreifen. Es ist ein Schicksalskampf: das Deutschland der Gründerzeit ist zum geistigen Schlachtfeld geworden, auf dem sich die großen Russen, Nordländer, Franzosen, Belgier begegnen. Im Schlagwort vom "Naturalismus" ziehen sich alle formsprengenden, dem Massezeitalter geöffneten Lebenskräfte in der Dichtung zusammen. Das Gegenschlagwort "Symbolismus" umgreift, was an Form- und Kulturbewußtsein solchem Einbruch sich entgegenstemmt: als "Neuromantik," "Neuklassik," "Neuidealismus" usw. In Whitman und George nimmt dieses Kräftespiel die äußerste Gegenspannung an, indem es im Lyrischen bis ins Urelement, in den Rhythmus dringt. Whitman—das ist die erste naive rhythmische Bewältigung des technischen Zeitalters, in einem donnernden, traditionslosen, aber mitreißenden Massenrhythmus. Dagegen stellt George die äußerste Zusammenziehung und Einschmelzung des europäischen Kulturerbes in die deutsche Wortsubstanz in einem streng gegliederten, liturgisch feierlichen, monopodisch taktierenden Rhythmus dar.[1]

So absolut wird dadurch der Gegensatz, daß sich in ihm eine Verschiedenheit des Dichtertypus ausgeprägt zeigt, in dem jene geniale Unterscheidung Schillers von 1795, die Scheidung des naiven und des sentimentalischen Dichters, sich auf eine neue überraschende Weise bestätigt. Als eine Scheidung, in der Kontinente gegeneinanderstehen. Bei Whitman das junge, naiv in den Aufschwung der Technik hineingewachsene Amerika in einer noch ungeformten Fülle, unverbildet, unbeschwert von Tradition. In George das durch ein uraltes griechisch-römisch-christliches Erbe geprägte europäische Kulturbewußtsein, das seit Rousseau auf dem Wege ist, "die verlorne Natur zu suchen," sie von der Idee her in Freiheit immer wieder als heiles Ganzes herzustellen. Die Weiträumigkeit, mit der Schiller einst im inneren Ringen mit seinem Antipoden Goethe die beiden Typen umrissen, als Ausdruck von Dichtung und als Existenzmächtigkeit des Realisten und des Idealisten, prägt eine Fülle philosophischer Formeln aus, die an den Beispielen aus

[1] Vgl. A. Closs, *Die freien Rhythmen in der deutschen Lyrik* (Bern, 1947), S. 192.

Schillers Zeitalter gewonnen fortwirkend sich hier am Gegensatz der Kontinente bewähren. Zugleich doch ist der Jahrhundertwandel unverkennbar, der Goethe von Whitman, Schiller von George trennt, die Objektbindung Goethes vom stoffhungrigen, stoffrohen Lobsänger der technisierten Massenzeit; und die Geistesfreiheit, den Ideenschwung Schillers von der gewaltsamen Magie, mit der George als Priester des eigengeschaffnen Gottes seine Kultgemeinde im Dichterwort umzirkt. Beide aber sprechen sich in den Symbolen der Dichtung aus, die auch das Unbewußte erhellen.

I

Einleuchtender kann für einen ersten Ausgangspunkt nichts sein, als die äußre Kontur, die sich am Gegensatz der von den beiden Dichtern gewählten Buchtitel abzeichnet. Whitman kennt nur eines, immer dasselbe, von der ersten Auflage 1855 bis zur zehnten im Todesjahr 1892: *Leaves of Grass*. Georges Büchertitel suchen hohe erlesne Wortgruppen von geheimnisvollem Klang: *Hymnen, Pilgerfahrten, Algabal; Die Bücher der Hirten und Preisgedichte, der Sagen und Sänge und der Hängenden Gärten; Das Jahr der Seele; Der Teppich des Lebens; Der Siebente Ring; Der Stern des Bundes; Das Neue Reich.*

Bereits hinter diesen hieroglyphischen Buchtiteln erschließt sich der Gegensatz zweier Welten. Whitman begreift sein Dichten von Anbeginn wahrhaft wie grünes Gras, das sich sprießend immer neu und unendlich vermehrt. "Ich glaube, es muß die Flagge meines Wesens sein, gewoben aus hoffnungsgrünem Stoff." "Oder ich glaube, es ist eine einzige große Hieroglyphe und bedeutet: Trieb und Wachstum sind die gleichen überall!" Nichts kann Schillers Begriff des Naiven sinnfälliger umdeuten! Das dichterische Ich selber wie grünes Gras, Verse hervorbringend urwachstümlich, alles überwachsend, in alles verschlungen. Und zugleich gilt von ihm, was Schiller in den Satz prägt: "seine Einfälle sind Eingebungen eines Gottes"—das heißt, sie sind von überraschender Tiefe; und so schließt das Bild vom sprießenden Gras seherhaft das sprießende Leben ein, das aus dem Tode, aus den Gräbern dringt:

> It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men;
> It may be if I had known them I would have loved them;
> It may be you are from old people, and from women, and from
> offspring taken soon out of their mothers' laps;
> And here you are the mothers' laps.[2]

Wir finden diese Verse im Sang "Walt Whitman" (1855), in dem der Dichter sich selbst besingt, in dem der ganze künftige Kosmos der Grashalme vorweggenommen ist, als das symbolische, in alles verteilte

[2] Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, ed. David McKay (Philadelphia, 1900), S. 36.

Selbst. Das Ich-Bewußtsein ist, kann man sagen, hier zurückgegangen und aufgehoben in einen totalen Daseinszusammenhang. So völlig, daß die Grashalmverse das immer gleiche, unermeßliche Dasein aussingen, jeder Vers ein einzelner, und doch alle gleich. Wechselnde Stimme aller im All. Das ist der umfassende Grashalm-Sinn. Darum kann Whitman sein Grashalm-Werk einleiten mit dem Vers:

> One's-Self I sing—a simple, separate Person;
> Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-masse.[3]

Dieser Grashalmsänger füllt sein Grashalmbild aus, indem er nichts andres ist als der naive Massemensch, Mensch eines neuen Kontinents, eines neugewachsenen Allgefühls, Gemeinschaftsgefühls, einer jungen, massefrohen Weltfülle.

Georges Buchtitel sind Prägungen eines reflektierenden Formgeists, der den Abstand betont und das Erlesene sucht. Sie sind wie Tafeln aufgerichtet, hinter denen eine eigne Welt des Form-Schönen, eine Kunst um der Kunst willen beginnt. Sie drücken dasselbe aus, was sich im Programm der *Blätter für die Kunst* ausgedrückt findet: "Sie will die GEISTIGE KUNST auf Grund der neuen Fühlweise und Mache—eine Kunst für die Kunst."[4] Schiller[5] hatte dem sentimentalischen Dichter die "Darstellung des Ideals" zugesprochen. Ideale Zustände rufen die *Hymnen und Pilgerfahrten*, die *Bücher der Hirten* auf. Ein romantischer Idealismus ist es, der sich hier seine Geheimwelt der Form, seine Traum- und Wunderwelt aufrichtet, seinen Adel in der Begnadung des Schönen. Ideale jener Zeitströmung, für die um 1905 der Name "Neuromantik" aufgekommen ist. Eben damals aber bereits beginnen sich Georges Buchtitel, ohne den Abstand des Erlesenen zu verringern, auf monumentale Einfachheit zuzubewegen: *Das Jahr der Seele, Der Siebente Ring, Der Stern des Bundes.* Eine gestalthafte Würde prägt sich aus, der es nicht so sehr mehr um schöne Form, sondern um neue Werte-Tafeln zu tun ist. Ein Neu-Idealismus, mehr auf Formgeist und Formstrenge gerichtet als auf Formgenuß und Formgefühl; in den Schlagworten der Zeit gesprochen mehr "Neuklassik" als "Neuromantik." Während Whitman eine einzige naive Wesensmetapher immer wieder wachsend abwandelt ("grünes Gras"), bauen Georges Buchtitel den Ablauf einer sentimentalischen Weltgestaltung vor uns auf. Eine Weltgestaltung aus der Idee, die den symbolisierenden Abstand auch da festhält, wo die Rückbeziehung auf das Selbst des Dichters unmittelbar einleuchtet wie beim *Jahr der Seele.*

Wer mit Schiller den sentimentalischen Dichter als den erkennt, der imgrunde immer nach der verlornen Natur auf dem Wege ist, der wird

[3] Ebenda, S. 11.
[4] *Blätter für die Kunst, Auslese 1892-98* (Berlin, 1899), S. 10.
[5] Schiller, *Werke*, Jubiläumsausgabe (Stuttgart, 1905), XII, 188.

nicht überrascht sein, daß Georges gewaltsames Selbst sich im *Stern des Bundes* einer Stufe nähert, in der es reflektierend und in spruchhafter Strenge ein Wachstumsbild wie Whitman sucht:

> Im Einklang fühl ich Keim und Welke,
> Mein Leben seh ich als ein Glück.[6]

Welcher Gegensatz aber: Georges spruchhaft-strenger Nominalstil: "Keim-Welke" und Whitmans unermüdlich abgewandelte Bilderfülle um das Urerlebnis des grashaft wachsenden, anonymen, in alles sich verwandelnden Ich.

II

Jeder der beiden Dichter bewahrt den Augenblick im Gedächtnis, in dem sein Dichtertum so erschütternd durchbricht, daß es als ein Akt der Weihe gespürt wird. Whitman schildert den Augenblick genau, in der Hymne "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking." Es ist ein Lied der Erinnerung, angestimmt 1860 auf der Höhe erster Meisterschaft. Es führt in die Kindheit zurück: er beobachtet in den Dünen am Meer ein liebendes Spottdrosselpärchen, das Weibchen auf dem Nest, und plötzlich muß er den grenzenlosen Schmerz des verlassnen Männchens miterleben, dem sein Weibchen umgekommen. Mitfühlender Schmerz zerreißt ihm das Herz. Und eben in dem Augenblick strömen ihm Worte zu, die dem Vogelklageruf Menschenlaut und Menschensinn geben. Das spürt Whitman als die Geburt seines eigentlichen Dichtertums. Mitleidenskraft löst ihm die Stimme zum Gesang; er spürt es als die Schicksalswendung seines Lebens:

> Demon or bird (said the boy's soul,)
> Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it mostly to me?
> For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping,
> Now I have heard you,
> Now in a moment I know what I am for—I awake,
> And already a thousand singers—a thousand songs, clearer, louder,
> and more sorrowful than yours,
> A thousand warbling echoes have started to life within me,
> Never to die ...
> Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what
> there, in the night,
> By the sea, under the yellow and sagging moon,
> The messenger there arous'd—the fire, the sweet hell within,
> The unknown want, the destiny of me.[7]

So erschütternd ist dem Dichter der Augenblick, daß sich ihm der Vogel zum "Dämon" verwandelt (das Wort "Dämon" ist ausdrücklich zu-

[6] George, *Stern des Bundes*, S. 99. Zitiert ist nach Georges Bondi-Originalausgaben. Der Text nicht in der Georgeschen Minuskel, sondern normalisiert; in der Annahme, daß Georges Werk über seinen esoterischen Kreis hinausgewachsen ist.

[7] *Leaves of Grass*, S. 406.

gefügt 1867). Naturdämonische Gewalt ist es, die im Urschmerz der Kreatur ihm, dem mitfühlenden Menschen selber das Herz zerreißt und in ihm Worte aufquellen läßt, Worte des unendlichen Mitgefühls, aus schmerzzerrissener, mitzerrissener Brust.

Um den frühen George dagegen ist Einsamkeit und selbstgewählter Abstand. Einsam geht er in die Natur hinaus, und während er dort "mit Geistern Rede tauscht," erfährt er seine Dichterberufung als feierliche "Weihe," durch den Kuß der Muse. Sie erscheint ihm wie ein Engel aus der Kunstwelt D. G. Rossettis, des "Prärafaeliten." Seltsam lebensferne Pose ist es, die dem ganzen Gedicht den Stempel aufdrückt. Ein Sich-Zurücknehmen aus der Natur, der umgebenden Landschaft in die innere Schau, bis in den Schlußversen die Weihe die ideelle Verkörperung findet:

> Nun bist du reif, nun schwebt die Herrin nieder,
> Mondfarbne Gazeschleier sie umschlingen,
>
> Halboffen ihre traumesschweren Lider
> Zu dir geneigt die Segnung zu vollbringen.
>
> Indem ihr Mund auf deinem Antlitz bebte
> Und sie dich rein und so geheiligt sah,
> daß sie im Kuß nicht auszuweichen strebte
> dem Finger, stützend deiner Lippe nah.[8]

Alles ist hier künstlich-kunstvoll gestellt: vom Gazeschleier bis zur Kuß-Haltung. Die "Weihe" ist zum Bild erstarrt, und dem entspricht der jambisch taktierende Rhythmus. Wie Lähmung liegt der Wille zur Schönform über diesem erhabnen Augenblick der Weihe, die eine selbstgesetzte Weihe ist. Wo ist hier etwas, dem Ausbruch eines "Dämons" vergleichbar?

Wir erweitern den Ausblick bei beiden Dichtern auf ihr Verhältnis zur Natur überhaupt. Nichts kann Whitmans dämonisches Naturgefühl deutlicher, einfacher und zugleich großartiger veranschaulichen als jenes Drossellied aus derselben Hymne, jenes Zeugnis seines erschütterten Mitergriffenseins vom Schmerz der Kreatur. Er wagt es, den Schmerzenssang im Menschenlaut nachzustammeln, allerfühlend:

> Soothe! soothe! soothe!
> Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
> And again another behind, embracing and lapping, every one close,
> But my love soothes not me, not me.
>
> Low hangs the moon—it rose late;
> O it is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.
>
> O madly, the sea pushes, pushes upon the land,
> With love—with love ...[9]

[8] *Hymnen* (Berlin, 1890), S. 12; Friedrich Gundolf, *George* (Berlin, 1920), S. 62.

[9] *Leaves of Grass*, S. 403.

Welche rhythmische Verwandlung: der Whitmansche Massenrythmus hier liedartig gebunden und doch freischwebend. Im Mitfühlen mit dem Vogelschmerz ein Allfühlen mit der umgebenden Natur: der Mond, das Meer. Einschwingen in die Schmerzensschwingung des All. Die Liebesschwingung, die unendlich ist noch im Schmerz. Solche Weltoffenheit wird zum lösenden Geschenk der Natur an die schmerzerschütterte Seele. Unermüdlich in immer neuen Liedwellen singt der Dichter die Vogelklage aus. Dem Dichter aber ist gegeben, was dem kleinen Vogelleid nicht erfühlbar ist, das Geheimnis der Welt selbst, das allösende Grundwort zu finden, das ihm allein aus der Unendlichkeit des Meers entgegentönt, das Wort: "Tod." Es ist die letzte Steigerung: der Dichter, mitfühlend mit der Kreatur, vom Dämon Vogel erschüttert, ganz und gar hingegeben dem mitfühlenden All, wird aus dem Vogelleid mit hineingenommen in das Urleid der Welt, wie es im Meersrauschen tönt.

> Whereto answering, the sea,
> Delaying not, hurrying not,
> Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,
> Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word DEATH;
> And again Death—ever Death, Death, Death ...

Unmittelbar läßt sich hier anführen, was Schiller[10] vom naiven Dichter sagt: "Das Objekt besitzt ihn gänzlich, sein Herz liegt nicht wie ein schlechtes Metall gleich unter der Oberfläche, sondern will wie das Gold in der Tiefe gesucht sein. Wie die Gottheit hinter dem Weltgebäude, so steht er hinter seinem Werk ..." Und so kann Whitman, der allmitfühlende, nicht ruhen, bis seine Stimme zur Stimme des Daseins selbst geworden ist, mit dem Schlüsselwort ("the clew") zum Weltgeheimnis darin.

Grundanders Georges Verhältnis zur Natur. Auch bei ihm entwickeln sich Tiefenkräfte, die den Begriff des Dämonischen heranrufen, es ist eine Art dämonisches Nicht-Gefühl, eine gewollte Ferne des Fühlens, die den extremen Gegensatz zu Whitmans Mitfühlen darstellt. Denn was George anzieht, ist grade das Tote, Unlebendige, Gegennatürliche. Dafür aber findet seine Phantasie Bilder, die man nur als den Durchbruch eines ersten Surrealismus würdigen kann. Im Bereich der Gestalt des grausamen, zur Unnatur gesteigerten Priesterkaisers Algabal aus dem späten Rom malt George eine Gartenlandschaft, die aus derselben Bewußtseinsform wie Baudelaires *Fleurs du Mal* heraufsteigt:

> Mein Garten bedarf nicht Luft und nicht Wärme,
> Der Garten, den ich mir selber erbaut,
> Und seiner Vögel leblose Schwärme
> Haben noch nie einen Frühling geschaut.

[10] Schiller, a. a. O., S. 183.

Von Kohle die Stämme, von Kohle die Äste,
Und düstere Felder am düsteren Rain,
Der Früchte nimmer gebrochene Läste
Glänzen wie Lava im Pinien-Hain ...[11]

Bis in jede Zeile ein Gegenwurf gegen jede imitative Kunst, gegen den Naturalismus der Zeit. Ins "Unterreich" vom Dichter verwiesen. Magische Gegen-Natur von bannender Leblosigkeit. Bis der Schlußvers das Unmögliche fordert, in magischer Beschwörung:

Wie zeug ich dich aber im Heiligtume
—So fragt ich, wenn ich es sinnend durchmaß,
in kühnen Gespinsten der Sorge vergaß—
Dunkle, große, schwarze Blume?

Ein rätselhafter Symbolismus: wen meint die "schwarze Blume"? Gundolf[12] deutet sie als das "sinnlich-dunkle Zeichen für das Geheimnis der Zeugung, des Wachstums, das nicht mehr der Schau und dem Willen untersteht, und ohne dessen Erzwingung der Vollkommenheitstraum eben doch unvollkommen ist." Ein verräterisches Zeichen zugleich für das Unvermögen des Surrealisten, seine bannende Magie des Unlebendig-Gegennatürlichen durchzuhalten. Die letzte Frage hebt die düstre Vision des Unterreichs auf, als ein Gewaltsames, dem eben doch das Tiefste, das schöpferische Unbewußte sich versagt. Der sentimentalische Dichter, sagt Schiller,[13] "verläßt die Wirklichkeit, um zu Ideen aufzusteigen und mit freier Selbsttätigkeit seinen Stoff zu beherrschen." So können surrealistische Bilder entstehen wie der Garten des Algabal; doch nur zu leicht gilt dann Schillers Folgerung: "so wird man bei den Geburten des sentimentalischen Dichters oft vergebens nach dem Gegenstande fragen"; und so wird er in den "Fehler der Leerheit" verfallen; denn "ein Geistesspiel ohne Gegenstand ist Nichts im ästhetischen Urteil." Es sind Folgerungen, die jede surrealistische Verkrampfung treffen, auch wenn sie wie heute in Europa die Wertmaße bestimmen. Georges Algabal-Dichtung 1892 hat hier den Weg bereitet; sie läßt zugleich durchblicken, daß dieser surrealistische Krampf von unbewußter Verzweiflung und Melancholie untertönt ist:

Es ziemt nicht in irdischer Klage zu wanken
Uns, die das Los für den Purpur gebar.[14]

Wo sich der gegennatürliche Bann gelockert hat, im *Jahr der Seele* mit der Parklandschaft, dem "totgesagten Park" im Hintergrund, dringt

[11] *Hymnen*, S. 96.
[12] Gundolf, *George*, S. 86.
[13] Schiller, S. 239 ff.
[14] *Hymnen*, S. 109.

die Melancholie um so ungehemmter hervor.[15] "Ich lasse meine große Traurigkeit /dich falsch erraten, um dich zu verschonen." Welche dunklen Mächte es sind, die die Naturenfremdung untergründen mit namenloser Traurigkeit, das tritt an andrer Stelle verräterischer hervor.

III

Zwiesprache mit dem Unbewußten hat bei beiden Dichtern zu Gedichten geführt, in denen dasselbe Bild dichterisch ausgestaltet ist. Um so schärfer werden die Gegensätze deutlich.

In Whitmans Sang vom Selbst "Walt Whitman," diesem Urgesang des Grashalmsymbols, bringt das fünfte Gedicht so etwas wie einen kleinen Mythos von der Begegnung des Selbst mit der Seele. So leidenschaftlich ist die Zwiesprache geführt, daß es gut ist, von vornherein zu erinnern, der Dichter spricht mit dem Du nicht eine Geliebte, sondern die eigne Seele an:

I mind how once we lay, such a transparent summer morning;
How you settled your head athwart my hips, and gently turn'd over upon me,

And parted the shirt from my bosom-bone, and plunged your tongue
to my bare-stript heart,
And reach'd till you felt my beard, and reach'd till you held my feet.

Swiftly arose and spread around me the peace and knowledge that pass all the
argument of the earth;
And I know that the hand of God is the promise of my own,
And I know that the spirit of God is the brother of my own;
And that all the men ever born are also my brothers, and the women my
sisters and lovers;
And that a kelson of the creation is love ...[16]

Was diese Verse durchdringt an allumfassender Liebesleidenschaft (wie später die "Kinder Adams"), ist hier reine geistige Leidenschaft, die aus dem Unbewußten heraufdringt und die ganze Welt umschließt. Der Dichter sucht ein Bild für die Seelenbewirkung bis auf den Grund, und findet nur ein ganz elementares, das ihm Genüge tun kann: das Eintauchen der Zunge ins entblößte Herz. Das Überraschende aber ist die völlig zwiespaltlose Einheit, mit der hier Bewußt und Unbewußt und Universum sich in eins verschmolzen fühlen. Und die Anrufung Gottes für diesen Vorgang.

Aus demselben Grundbild formt sich bei George das dritte Spruchgedicht im zweiten Buch vom *Stern des Bundes*, in dem der geistige Eros aus der Mitte des Maximin-Erlebnis übergreift auf Seelen, die zum Bund zusammengeschlossen werden sollen:

[15] *Jahr der Seele*, S. 22.
[16] *Leaves of Grass*, S. 35.

Auf der Brust an deines Herzens Stelle
Laß den Mund mich legen, daß er drinne
Alter Fieber zuckend Schwären sauge,
Wie der Heilungsstein das Gift der Wunde.
Meine Hand in deiner gibt den Strom
Deinen Gliedern, daß sie frei sich regen ...
Klag nun nicht, daß dein genesend Hirn
Schwarze Dünste von verwesten Träumen
Immer wieder füllten—denn die lodern
Flüchtig auf im Brande dieser Liebe.[17]

Dasselbe Bild von der Seelenbewirkung bis auf den Grund; das Eintauchen mit dem Atem des Mundes in die geöffnete Brust. Doch anstelle jenes zwiespaltlosen Gott-Allgefühls, das Mensch und Universum verbindet, zeigt Georges Gedicht einen Zustand des Seeleninnern, der von unterdrückten Traumdünsten, von schwärenden Fiebern, von Seelenwunden gemartert ist. Da haben wir dem jungen Amerika gegenüber eine schwer erkrankte Kulturseele Europa, die der Heilung bedarf. Die alten Fieber, die zuckend in der Seele schwären, erinnern nur zu deutlich an jene Lebenswunde des Zeitalters, die der schärfste philosophische Geist der Zeit, Friedrich Nietzsche,[18] mit dem Wort vom "Ressentiment" aufgedeckt hat: ressentir=das Nachweh in der Seele spüren von Wunden, die das Leben uns geschlagen; die Wunde des Lebensneides, wie sie Scheler[19] als seelische Selbstvergiftung durchleuchtet hat, als unausgewirkte Rachsucht, die nach innen schlägt und sich selbst vergiftet. Eine Zeiterkrankung, der alle Sentimentalischen ausgeliefert sind, alle aus dem naiven Weltgefüge Herausgefallenen aus dem Gleichgewicht, aus dem Zusammenhang von Gott und Welt. Das Europa der Jahrhundertwende steigt herauf, mit seinen Seelenbelastungen, gehemmt in allen natürlichen Regungen des Miteinander, der Einzelne in sich verkapselt, preisgegeben der Wucht der Massen. die sein Kulturgewicht erdrücken. Diesselbe Zeit, die zur Psychoanalyse führt, zum Überhandnehmen der Nervenkranken, der Neurosen, die die Heilsdoktrin der Freudschen Lehre[20] heraufgeführt (um 1890, in Wien zur gleichen Zeit, wo Whitman und George zu wirken beginnen).

Gegen solchen Hintergrund bekommen die beiden Gedichte ihr besonderes Gewicht. Whitmans leidenschaftlich flutendes Allgefühl, das Bewußt und Unbewußt verbindet, ist zugleich das namenlose Massefühlen, das vom Zeitgeist bestätigte Ja-Sagen zum Göttlichen in allen Spannungsformen der Zeit. Eben darin erfüllt sich abermals Schillers Kennzeichnung des naiven Dichters: "ihm hat die Natur die Gunst

[17] *Stern des Bundes*, S. 46.
[18] Nietzsche, *Genealogie der Moral* (1886).
[19] M. Scheler, "Das Ressentiment im Aufbau der Moralen," *Abhandlungen und Aufsätze*, I (Leipzig, 1915).
[20] Meine Darstellung: *Das Bild in der Dichtung* (Marburg, 1939), II, 21 ff.

erzeigt, immer als ungeteilte Einheit zu wirken, in jedem Moment ein selbständiges und vollendetes Ganze zu sein und die Menschheit, ihrem vollen Gehalt nach, in der Wirklichkeit darzustellen." George, der als Magier-Priester seines selbstgeschaffnen Bundes die Spruchtafeln aufstellt, verrät in der symbolischen Begegnung des bewußten Magiergeistes mit der unbewußten Jugend die ganze zerquälte Seelenlage der Zeit.

IV

Wir haben damit einen ersten Punkt erreicht, eine Daseinsmitte, von der aus die Perspektiven sich ausweiten. In dem zwiespaltlosen Allgefühl Whitmans liegt ein Schlüssel zu seinem ganzen Werk. Hier gründet ein Fortschrittsoptimismus, ein Ja-Sagen zur Masse, zur Technik, zur technischen Weltentwicklung unter einer ideal gesehenen Demokratie, daß hier das repräsentative Antlitz Amerikas heraufdringt. Ein Lied der Einfalt, das sich über den ungeheuerlichsten Widersprüchen zusammenschließt. Die Größe, die ihm innewohnt, läßt sich nicht hemmen durch einen Predigerton, der das Ideal des Massenhaften in unermeßlich breitströmenden Gesängen feiert; was immer wieder als Größe hindurchdringt, liegt im fanatisch-jungen, ganzheitlichen Kern, der fortreißend sich mit Anschauungsbildern dieser miterlebten Massenzeit füllt, der zugleich seherhaft in die Zukunft vorstößt. Es ist ein wahrhafter Glaubenskern darin, der wie eine glühende Sonne aus dem Zentrum jeder dieser Riesenhymnen leuchtet, ganz und gar durchdrungen von der Gewißheit, daß die täglich erfahrne Einheit im Wirbel des Ganzen niemand anders als Gott selber ist.

Eines der großartigsten pathetischen Whitman-Bekenntnisse in die Zukunft hinein, eine wahrhafte Welt-Vision, die Amerika wie Europa umspannt, mag hier als markanter Ausdruck zugleich des Whitmanschen Gotterlebens stehen. Ein Gedicht, "Years of the Modern," das 1865 zuerst erschien, unter der Erschütterung des Bürgerkriegs entstanden:

Years of the modern! years of the unperform'd!
Your horizon rises—I see it parting away for more august dramas;
I see not America only—I see not only Liberty's nation, but other nations preparing;
I see tremendous entrances and exits—I see new combinations—I see the solidarity of races;
I see that force advancing with irresistible power on the world's stage;
(Have the old forces, the old wars, played their parts? are the acts suitable to them closed?)
I see Freedom, completely arm'd, and victorious, and very haughty, with Law on one side, and Peace on the other,
A stupendous Trio, all issuing forth against the idea of caste;
—What historic denouements are these we so rapidly approach?

I see men marching and countermarching by swift millions;
I see the frontiers and boundaries of the old aristocracies broken;
I see the landmarks of European kings removed;
I see this day the People beginning their landmarks (all others give way;)
—Never were such sharp questions ask'd as this day;
Never was average man, his soul, more energetic, more like a God;
Lo! how he urges and urges, leaving the masses no rest;
His daring foot is on land and sea everywhere—he colonizes the Pacific, the archipelagoes;
With the steam-ship, the electric telegraph, the newspaper, the wholesale engines of war,
With these, and the world-spreading factories, he interlinks all geography, all lands;
—What whispers are these, O lands, running ahead of you, passing under the seas?
Are all nations communing? is there going to be but one heart to the globe?
Is humanity forming, en-masse?—for lo! tyrants tremble, crowns grow dim;
The earth, restive, confronts a new era, perhaps a general divine war;
No one knows what will happen next—such portents fill the days and nights;
Years prophetical! the space ahead as I walk, as I vainly try to pierce it, is full of phantoms;
Unborn deeds, things soon to be, project their shapes around me;
This incredible rush and heat—this strange extatic fever of dramas, O years!
Your dreams, O year, how they penetrate through me! (I know not whether I sleep or wake!)
The perform'd America and Europe grow dim, retiring in shadow behind me,
The unperform'd, more gigantic than ever, advance, advance upon me.[21]

Die Hymne überrascht und überwältigt durch die seherhafte Wucht, mit der der Zusammenbruch des alten Europas vorausgeahnt ist, eine apokalyptische Vision, die mit genialer Einfalt Raum schafft für das Zukunftsbild der Welt-Demokratie. Indem Whitman hier sich bedingungslos seinen Wunschbildern der Zukunft zuwirft, gleicht er jenem Schillerschen naiven Dichter, der "aus seiner Art tritt und sentimentalisch wird, um nur dichterisch zu sein."[22] Es gelingt ihm, in seinem unbeirrbaren Ganzheitsgefühl, Gegenwart und Zukunft so in eins zu sehen, daß eines unmittelbar aus dem andern erwächst. Das eben gibt der pathetischen Vision ihre reale Wucht. Die Rhetorik der Wiederholungen schließt sich zusammen zu einem Weltzeitrhythmus, der wie Flut und Ebbe ist. Massenstil tut sich auf als großer Stil, als Stil, der Welträume faßt. Inmitten aber steht der Jubelruf der Einfalt, der das Ganze trägt und zusammenzieht: "Never was average man, his soul, more energetic, more like a God." Das Alltäglichste das Göttliche, der Durchschnittsmensch, der Massemensch Träger des Weltgeheimnisses selbst. In diesem Glauben schließt für Whitman Gegenwart und Zukunft nahtlos zusammen.

Dagegen nun wird George zur Stimme des alternden, müd gewor-

[21] *Leaves of Grass*, S. 335.
[22] Schiller, S. 233.

denen Abendlands; doch indem er dieser Stimme Laut gibt, bewährt er den Vorzug des sentimentalischen Dichters darin, daß er "einen mangelhaften Gegenstand aus sich selbst heraus ergänzt und sich durch eigne Macht aus seinem begrenzten Zustand in einen Zustand der Freiheit versetzt."[23] Es gelingt ihm in einer Freiheit der Form-Entscheidung, die den poetischen Gegenstand zur Würde eines aufschließenden Symbols erhebt. Die Melancholie des *Jahrs der Seele* verdichtet sich im Symbol der sterbenden Religion:

Ihr tratet zu dem Herde,
Wo alle Glut verstarb.
Licht war nur an der Erde
Vom Monde leichenfarb.

Ihr tauchtet in die Aschen
Die bleichen Finger ein
Mit Suchen, Tasten, Haschen—
Wird es noch einmal Schein?

Seht, was mit Trostgebärde
Der Mond euch rät:
Tretet weg vom Herde.
Es ist worden spät.[24]

So niederdrückend der Inhalt, so meisterhaft-priesterlich die Form. Dem breitströmenden Gradezu-Sprechen Whitmans gegenüber ist hier im Gedicht alles Bild, gestaltetes Mysterium. Wir erleben einen Ritus der Mysten mit. Wir sind im Tempel. Die Einfachheit hat etwas Sakrales, jede Handlung bekommt symbolischen Hintersinn. "Ihr tratet zu dem Herde"—"Tretet weg vom Herde." Dumpf hämmert der Dreitakter die Vergeblichkeit menschlichen Suchens ein: "Es ist worden spät." Eine unsagbare Traurigkeit breitet sich aus. Eine müd gewordne Kultur sucht vergebens noch die Herdfeuer des alten Glaubens anzuzünden. "Das ist die wahre Symbolik," sagt Goethe, "wo das Besondre das Allgemeinere repräsentiert, nicht als Traum und Schatten sondern als lebendig augenblickliche Offenbarung des Unerforschlichen." Was kann einfacher sein, als dies "Besondre": das Herzutreten zum Herdfeuer, das Suchen, das Weg-Treten. Der Dichter hebt es ins Sakrale, allein durch Wahl und Fügung der Worte. Er macht es zum Zeichen, das einen Hintersinn in sich aufschließt: zum Symbol, zum aufschließenden Symbol, und was sich erschließt, ist die bedrükkende Vision vom geistigen Untergang des Abendlands. Was Spengler unmittelbar vor dem Weltkrieg in den Begriff gebracht, hier ist es ein Jahrzehnt vorher vom Dichter als Bild gesehen.

Die Kontinente treten auseinander. Walt Whitmans Amerika, die Stimme des Massemenschen, naiv-geschichtslos, mit dem Blick in die

[23] Ebenda.
[24] *Jahr der Seele*, S. 118.

Zukunft, lebensgläubig, unüberwindlich jung, mit dem Pathos der Demokratie, die die Völker verbindet. Georges Europa rückgewandt, vom Zweifel gelähmt, skeptisch-müd, doch mit dem symbolischen Altersblick, der in die Tiefen der Form hineingeht, eine erlesene, die Masse abweisende, aristokratische Form, die nur durchs Symbol zu allen spricht, oder vielmehr doch nur zu den wenigen, die sich solcher esoterischen Symbolik öffnen.

V

Die Form-Ebene aber, die wir damit erreicht haben, fordert ihre besondre Besinnung. Hier ist der sentimentalische Dichter, so wie Schiller ihn sieht, vor dem naiven im Vorteil. Denn die "Gunst der Natur," der der naive Dichter das meiste verdankt, bindet ihn zugleich ans Objekt, und er läuft Gefahr, in Schillers Formel, "gemeine Natur zu werden." Dem sentimentalischen Dichter dagegen in seinem Abstand zur Natur bleibt die Freiheit zum "größeren Gegenstand."[25]

Der Gefahr, gemeine Natur zu werden, scheint Whitman weithin verfallen. Wir dürfen uns auf wenige markante Urteile beschränken. Emerson, der die *Leaves of Grass* 1855 als das "amerikanische Gedicht" begrüßt hatte, schrieb später: "Ich dachte, er würde die Lieder der Nation schaffen, aber er scheint sich damit zu begnügen, ihr Inventar aufzustellen."[26]

Whitmans naivem Welt-Staunen entsprechen jene breitströmenden Verswellen, in denen er sich hörend, sehend, rühmend aller Weltdinge des Erdraums bemächtigt, die der elektrische Draht verbindet. So unermeßlich ist seine staunende Freude, daß er Seiten und Seiten anhäuft, mit Beobachtungen wie ein Zeitungsreporter, und es ist ja bekannt, daß er ursprünglich darauf ausging, ein Volksredner zu werden, und daß sich das Rhetorische bei ihm erst allmählich ins Dichterische umgesetzt hat. So eben entstand, was Emerson ein "Inventar" nennt, eine Monotonie des Quantitativen, in der sich auf die naivste Weise das Massenhafte der heraufdringenden Massenzeit spiegelt. Man braucht nur eine Hymne wie "Salut au monde!" aufzuschlagen:

> What do you hear, Walt Whitman?
> I hear the workman singing, and the farmer's wife singing;
> I hear in the distance the sounds of children, and of animals
> early in the day;
> I hear ...[27]

Es folgen 26 Verszeilen, die mit "I hear" beginnen; es folgen über hundert Verszeilen, die mit "I see" beginnen. Und eben doch liegt schon

[25] Schiller, S. 233, 230.

[26] Henry Seidel Canby, *Walt Whitman, ein Amerikaner* (Berlin, 1947), S. 191, 200.

[27] *Leaves of Grass*, S. 139.

in solcher Häufung eine monumentale Einfachheit, die selber stilbildend wird. Was ihr Würde gibt, dieser massigen Stilform unermüdlicher Wiederholungen, das grade ist jener donnernde Einton eines Massenrhythmus, der hinter aller Massenvielfalt nichts anderes als das Welt-Eine, das Ewige will.

Es fehlt dabei durchaus nicht an Kunstgriffen der Einfalt, die Illusion des leichtbeschwingten Weltwanderers aufzurufen, dem der ständige Wechsel der Eindrücke Lebensluft und Aura eines allumfassenden Weltvertrauens ist. So der berühmte Eingang des "Song of the Open Road":

> Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,
> Healthy, free, the world before me,
> The long brown path before me, leading wherever I choose.[28]

Die sieghafte Unbekümmertheit des Weltwanderers, der auf jede Konvention pfeift, durchschwingt imgrunde jeden seiner Großgesänge und weckt dann um so mehr den Eindruck, daß die gehäuften Wiederholungen, diese massige Stilform der Quantität, sich als die Wesensform der Dinge selber ihm darbietet, sich seiner nur bedient als der Stimme, durch die das Massenzeitalter dröhnt. So bekommen die berühmten Großgesänge etwas vom ewigen Meeresrauschen, von dem sich der begeisterte Sänger im Rhythmus von Flut und Ebbe tragen läßt. Und er selber gibt diesem raunenden Dahinströmen die Deutung, daß es die Stimmen aller Menschen sind, die Stimmen "aller Menschen, aller Zeiten und Länder"; die Stimme der Demokratie selbst. Aber ist damit die Gefahr, "gemeine Natur zu werden," ganz gebannt? Läßt sich auf diesem Weg verhindern, daß "der Stoff zuweilen eine blinde Gewalt über die Empfänglichkeit ausübt"? "Kein Genie aus der naiven Klasse, sagt Schiller,[29] hat diese Klippe ganz vermieden." Whitman, der sich bereitwillig jedem Ausdruck des Gassenjargons, der Redensarten, des Masse-Idioms öffnet, um dem Konventionellen zu entgehen und die Volksseele zu treffen, erreicht er damit schon symbolische Gestalt?

Eben hier mag man die naive Treffsicherheit bewundern, mit der Whitman sein ganzes Dichten zusammennimmt im Bild der *Leaves of Grass*. Im Grashalm-Bild umfaßt er sein Wesensbild, das Sprießend-Grüne seines jungenhaften Dichtens, wie alle jene Schöpfungen des quantitativen Stils, ein unendlich wucherndes Prairiefeld von Gräsern, eins wies andre, mit den Steigerungen der "Calamus"-Gesänge, als des Riesen-Schilfgrases. Und doch bleibt dies Bild imgrunde immer nur Metapher, Gefühlsbild der Seele, die mit unbegrenztem rhetorischen Pathos alle Whitman-Gesänge in Grashalme verwandelt. Gefühlsmeta-

[28] Ebenda, S. 169.
[29] Schiller, S. 234-235.

phern aber sind noch nicht schon symbolische Gestalt. Wir wenden uns der Gegenwelt des sentimentalischen Dichters zu, dem alles, was in seine Form eingeht, sich in Gestalt verwandelt, formelhaft ausgedrückt: eine der Whitmanschen Quantität entgegengerichtete Stilform der erlesenen Qualität.

Hier nun tritt uns bei George eine Dichtungsform entgegen, die der Grashalm-Metaphorik des Dichters der Massen und der Quantitäten wahrhaft antipodisch nur zuzuordnen ist: was George errichtet auf der Höhe seiner Kunst, sind "Standbilder" im eigentlichen Sinn, Gebilde einer reinen Kunstwelt, klare klassische Verfestigungen zur Gestalt, in denen, formvollendet und formkühl, das Besondre das Allgemeine repräsentiert im "Typus," oder auch im "Urbild," als "Darstellung des Ideals." Diese Standbilder aber sind zugleich mit solcher Formleidenschaft gestaltet, mit solcher Geheim-Leidenschaft, möchte man sagen, daß die klare Formgestalt sich mit einer Art hintergründig verhaltener Wort-Magie füllt, als wollte der Dichter dem erstorbnen religiösen Gefühl des Zeitalters durch die Kunstwelt seiner Standbilder Ersatz bieten, in aufschließender Symboltiefe.

Das Eingangsgedicht zum *Teppich des Lebens,* das selber den Namen des ganzen Gedichtbandes versinnbildet, faßt die Georgesche Kunst dieser Stufe so vollkommen zusammen, daß dies eine Gedicht exemplarisch wird nicht nur für George, sondern für die europäische Kunst der Zeit. Was George hier beschreibt mit meisterhaft geglückter Sprachkunst, ist ein wirklicher Gebetsteppich des Orients, mit seiner geheimnisvollen Ornamentik. Indem er aber dies magische Gewebe vor uns erstehen läßt, wird es hintergründig für die Magie der Kunst überhaupt, ja, tiefer hintergründig für das Bild des Lebens selbst, wie es George der Magier uns deutet (1900):

Hier schlingen Menschen mit Gewächsen, Tieren
Sich fremd zum Bund umrahmt von seidner Franze,
Und blaue Sicheln, weiße Sterne zieren
Und queren sie in dem erstarrten Tanze.

Und kahle Linien ziehn in reich-gestickten,
Und Teil um Teil ist wirr und gegenwendig
Und keiner ahnt das Rätsel der Verstrickten ...
Da eines Abends wird das Werk lebendig ...

Da regen schauernd sich die toten Äste,
Die Wesen eng von Strich und Kreis umspannet,
Und treten klar vor die geknüpften Quäste,
Die Lösung bringend, über die ihr sannet.

Sie ist nach Willen nicht, ist nicht für jede
Gewohne Stunde: ist kein Schatz der Gilde,
Sie wird den Vielen nie und nie durch Rede,
Sie wird den Seltnen selten im Gebilde.

Eine zu Hieroglyphen erstarrte Welt, die nur ein Zauberwort löst; ein dem Durchschnittsmenschen nie zugängliches Wort. Wie unmittelbar gegen Whitman scheinen die Schlußworte gesprochen: "Sie wird den Vielen nie und nie durch Rede!" Georges Kunst, Georges Lebensdeutung hat mit der Masse nichts gemein, die Magie ihrer "Gebilde" ruft nur die "Seltenen" auf. Ausgesondertheit, Erlesenheit, Schönheit ist das dämonisch auferlegte, stolz zu tragende Schicksal. Aristokratisch ist diese Kunst bis ins letzte Wort.

VI

Die Gegenüberstellung Whitman-George hat damit einen krisenhaften Zustand erreicht, der dem radikalen Gegensatz der Strömungen um die Jahrhundertwende in Deutschland, Naturalismus und Symbolismus, entspricht. Schillers Formeln vom Naiven und Sentimentalischen reichen aus, das Grundgerüst zu ziehen, und bewahren davor, die eine Strömung gegen die andre abzuwerten. Die Gefahren, die sie andeuten, haben sich nur ungewöhnlich verschärft nach dem Krisenhaften hin: Whitmans Monotonie des Reporterstils verdeutlicht die "blinde Gewalt des Stoffs über die Empfänglichkeit," Georges Standbilder in ihrer Abgelöstheit vom Leben nähern sich bei aller Formvollendung dem, was Schiller beim sentimentalischen Dichter "das Überspannte" nennt.[30] Einbruch der Brutalität der Massen auf der einen Seite, Lähmungen des symbolisierenden Vermögens unter dem Ressentiment eines Zeitalters auf der andern Seite.—Dennoch nun schließen Schillers Formeln den Anspruch ein, daß die gemeinsame dichterische Grundlegung nicht zu erschüttern ist, daß also auch Whitman und George als Exponenten des Naiven und Sentimentalischen auf der dichterischen Ebene vergleichbar bleiben.

Es zeigt sich, daß Whitman nicht mit dem Wort "Naturalismus" zu umfassen ist, daß vielmehr seine Art Naturalismus auf die amerikanische Natur zurückgeht, die im Abstoßen europäischer Traditionsformen ihre eigne neue Form sucht. Und es zeigt sich, daß ebensowenig George in seinem Gesamtwerk mit dem Wort "Symbolismus" zu fassen ist, dessen esoterische Bedeutsamkeit vielmehr mit dem ersten Weltkrieg zerschlagen wird. Das Schicksal hat es gewollt, daß beide Dichter, Whitman wie George, durch zwei gleiche Erschütterungen hindurchgegangen sind, durch die sie bis auf den Grund getroffen werden: Eros und Krieg. So ergeben sich Entwicklungsstufen, die parallel gehen, und eine Gemeinsamkeit des Dichterischen, die ihren Ausdruck sucht in der symbolischen Gestalt.

Nirgends wird Whitman panhaft-großartiger, als wo er die Weltkraft der Liebe besingt. Er besingt sie als gewaltigste Gotteswunder

[30] Ebenda, S. 240.

der Schöpfung mit brutaler Nacktheit. Schon die *Leaves of Grass* von 1855 enthalten die Hymne: "I sing the Body electric." Die Steigerungen, die "Children of Adam" und "Calamus," folgen 1860. Begreiflich, daß Emerson im puritanischen Amerika sich energisch bemühte, den Dichter davon abzubringen, doch vergebens. Zu ursprünglich ist Whitman selber als dem Adam des Paradieses Eros als Gotteskraft aufgegangen. Was er aber besingt, ist das Wunder des Geschlechts, wie es allen zuteil wird, das Massen-Erlebnis: Liebe, und er besingt es mit dem ganzen Pathos des Massenhaften, des puren Geschlechtlichen, als des Zeugerischen und Gebärenden. Darum liegt nichts von Schwüle darüber. Es ist für ihn die erhaltende Kraft des Kosmos selbst, die alles durchdringende schöpferische Kraft, die in der Menschenzeugung gipfelt. Der Stil der Quantität öffnet sich weitschwingenden Metaphern, kosmischer Prägung:[31] "Ebb stung by the flow, and flow stung by the ebb. . ." "Bridegroom night of love . . ." Bestimmend bleibt doch vorerst das rhetorische Pathos. Und doch nun überrascht bereits der Sang von 1855 in seiner schöpferischen Aufgewühltheit zugleich mit dem Ausgriff auf genau das, was Goethe, der große Naive,[32] den "symbolische Gegenstand" nennt (Stück 3):

> I know a man, a common farmer—the father of five sons;
> And in them were the fathers of sons—and in them were the fathers of sons.
> This man was of wonderful vigor, calmness, beauty of person . . .

Was Whitman hier entwirft, ist das Musterbild des Familienvaters, des Achtzigjährigen, von Söhnen, Töchtern und Enkeln umgeben, Urbild des Stolzen, Zeugerischen in seinem Bereich. Auch ein "Standbild," nur unmittelbar heraufgehoben aus der Wirklichkeit und aufgeschlossen für alle. Beispiel für Goethes Formel, wie er sie bei seinem Frankfurter Aufenthalt 1797 geprägt:[32] "Eminente Fälle, die in einer charakteristischen Mannigfaltigkeit als Repräsentanten von vielen andern dastehen, eine gewisse Totalität in sich schließen, eine gewisse Reihe fordern, Ähnliches und Fremdes in meinem Geiste aufregen und so von außen wie von innen an eine gewisse Einheit und Allheit Anspruch machen."

Der Schritt Whitmans von den Adamsgesängen zu den Calamusgesängen ist bereits der Schritt vom Quantitativen fort zum Besonderen. Die Steigerung der Liebe zu einem Weltdrang, der sich der Mannesfreundschaft ebenso leidenschaftlich öffnet wie der Frauenliebe, entzieht sich dem Massenhaften des puren Geschlechts, fordert Seelenbegegnung. Der Dichter warnt jetzt die, die seine Gedichte lesen und sich ihm zudrängen:

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[32] Brief an Schiller, 16 Aug. 1797.

Nor will my poems do good only—they will do just as much evil, perhaps more;
For all is useless without that which you may guess at many times and not hit—
that which I hinted at;
Therefore release me, and depart on your way.[33]

Um so begeisternder sucht Whitman in der Steigerung seines Grashalmbildes zum Calamus eine symbolhaltige Wirklichkeit, imstande, ganze Gedichte zu tragen. Aus der Metapher: "scented herbage of my breast"[34] entwirft er eine ganze Hymne, die die Kluft von Liebe und Tod übersingt. Das wirkliche Prairiegras[35] durchschreitend, ruft er ein Gleichnis auf (spiritual corresponding): aufsprießende Kameradschaft, "demand the blades to rise of words, acts beings." Pflückend wirkliche Gräser im Frühling beruft er die Geister der Freunde, teilt ihnen die Calamus-Wurzel zu,[36] "the token of comrades." Oder er verwebt "Wurzeln und Grashalme" und alles, was sonst die Natur hergibt, mit Liebesgedanken. Eine ganze Reihe von Kurzgedichten strebt symbolische Verschmelzung eines durchgehenden Bildes mit der Gefühlsgrundstimmung an. Das Pathos des Rhetorikers wird er doch noch nicht los. Einen Höhepunkt der Calamus-Liebe stellt das Kurzgedicht dar, das aus der Liebe von Kameraden die Demokratie aufbaut. Das Pathos verbildlicht sich um eine Metapher, die dem Calamusbild entwächst:

Come, I will make the continent indissoluble;
I will make the most splendid race the sun ever yet shone upon;
I will make divine magnetic lands,
With the love of comrades,
With the life-long love of comrades.
I will plant companionship thick as trees along all the rivers of America, and
along the shores of the great lakes, and all over the prairies;
I will make inseparable cities, with their arms about each others necks;
By the love of comrades,
By the manly love of comrades.
For you these, from me, O Democracy, to serve you, ma femme!
For you! for you, I am trilling these songs,
In the love of comrades,
In the high-towering love of comrades.[37]

Das große Gefühl ist in einen "Song" umgesetzt, ganz vom "Naiven der Gesinnung" getragen, ein Wunschbild der Einfalt, das die Liebe zum Kameraden zur Schöpfungsmitte macht, organisch wachsend, elektrisch, alldurchseelend. Pathos der Demokratie, allen ins Herz gesungen.

Georges früher Eros kennt keine Adamsgesänge, er verhüllt sich

[33] *Leaves of Grass*, S. 120.
[34] Ebenda, S. 118.
[35] Ebenda, S. 132.
[36] Ebenda, S. 122.
[37] Ebenda, S. 123.

hinter den Landschaftsbildern des *Jahrs der Seele*. Herbstbilder des "totgesagten Parks" nehmen die melancholische Gestimmtheit des Einsamen auf, der sein ungreifbares Du im Bild beschwört; im entsagenden Bild:

> Verschweigen wir, was uns verwehrt ist.
> Geloben wir glücklich zu sein,
> Wenn auch nicht mehr uns beschert ist,
> Als noch ein Rundgang zu zwein.[38]

Dann aber trifft den Dichter im Jüngling Maximin jener selbe weltmächtige Eros, der Whitmans Calamusgesänge trägt. Sieben Ringe schlägt er um die Tempelsmitte, in der er sich Maximin zum selbsterwählten Gott erhöht. Der sentimentalische Dichter als der Magier, der es wagt, dem sentimentalischen Zeitalter den verlornen Gott zurückzugeben. Whitmans "Song" des warmströmenden Herzens stellt sich Georges Gedicht entgegen, das wie in Erz gehämmert den "größeren Gegenstand" zum erhabnen steigert:

> Dem bist du Kind, dem Freund.
> Ich seh in dir den Gott,
> Den schauernd ich erkannt,
> Dem meine Andacht gilt.
>
> Du kamst am letzten Tag,
> Da ich vom Harren siech,
> Da ich des Betens müd
> Mich in die Nacht verlor:
>
> Du an dem Strahl mir kund,
> Der durch mein Dunkel floß,
> Am Tritte, der die Saat
> Sogleich erblühen ließ.[39]

Magie der Kunst stanzt einen Gott in die gottlose Zeit. Das ist der Sinn der monumentalen Aussage: das Du wird Gestalt. Reimlos, dreitaktig baut sich die Zeile zum Glaubenssatz: "Ich seh in dir den Gott." So "erhebt sich die Wirklichkeit zum Ideal," auf die dichteste Weise. Vollkommene Kunst schlägt um in magische Religion. Um diese Mitte zieht sich *Der Siebente Ring* und *Der Stern des Bundes*. Maximins Tod wird zum Weltereignis erhöht: das Entschwinden des Gottes. Georges Eros erfährt sich erst ganz in der Trauer um den Gott. Natur dringt nur in den magischen Kreis, zur toten Natur erstarrt, zum Monument der Trauer:

> Weh ruft vom Walde.
> Er schmückte sich mit frischem Laub umsonst.
> Die Flur erharrte dich, daß du sie weihtest.
> Sie friert, da du sie nun nicht sonnst ...

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[38] *Jahr der Seele*, S. 93.
[39] *Siebenter Ring*, S. 96.

Im jungen Schlag ein Krachen
Von Stamm zu Stamm—wann fällt der nächste?
Das morgendliche Grün erschlafft.
Das kaum entsprossne Gras liegt hingerafft.
Kein Vogel singt ... nur frostiger Winde Lachen
Und dann der Schall der Äxte.[40]

Gewaltsam entfärbte Natur, Symbol einer herrischen Sinngebung, unter der Magiertrauer, die das Universum mittrauern läßt. Rache, kann man sagen, die der Magier, der seines Gottes beraubte, am Leben nimmt. Und Rache ist es auch, die George als Zeitenrichter in den vorausgestellten "Zeitgedichten" am gottlosen Zeitalter nimmt: "Das Edelste ging euch verloren: Blut!" Der Ordensgründer aber wählt sich zum Vorbild die "Templer," die asketischen Ritter, die das Kreuz tragen; allein zur Rettertat des Zeitalters berufen. Gewaltsam nur können sie die Mutter Erde zwingen, ihnen dienstbar zu sein, Maximins Ideal zu verwirklichen:

Daß sie ihr Werk willfährig wieder treibt:
Den Leib vergottet und den Gott verleibt.

Den neuen Orden des Maximinkultes begründet der Magier-Priester dann durch die Gesetzestafeln des *Sterns des Bundes*. Die Gedichte, reimlose Spruchverse, erstarren zur Forderung absoluter Kunst. Sie begründen die kultische Gemeinde des Schönen Gottes. Whitmans schweifende Cameradoliebe erfährt ihr zuchtvolles Gegenbild in der Begegnung: Magier und Jünger; doch aus welch verquälter Tiefe:

Auf der Brust an deines Herzens Stelle
Laß den Mund mich legen, daß er drinne
Alter Fieber zuckend Schwären sauge ...

Im Magier-Priester zeichnet sich Schillers[41] gewaltsamer Idealist, der allzu leicht vergißt, "daß es auch um den Stamm getan ist, wenn die Wurzeln fehlen." Dem Dichter-Realisten, dem sich die Cameradoliebe zur Demokratie weitet, tritt der magische Ordensgründer entgegen.

VII

Auf der Höhe ihres Lebens und Dichtens werden beide Dichter vom Weltereignis eines Volkskriegs überrascht, in sein übermächtiges Schicksal mit hineingenommen und zu Entscheidungen gezwungen, an denen sie erst die volle Reife gewinnen. Whitman ist 42, George 48 Jahre alt, als der Krieg sie trifft. Whitman spürt den Kriegsausbruch 1861 als Bürgerkrieg, der ihm das Herz zerreißt, der ihm die geliebte amerikanische Demokratie zerreißt. George erleidet im ersten

[40] Ebenda, S. 103.
[41] Schiller, S. 259.

Weltkrieg 1914-18 den Untergang einer Jugend mit, für die ihm Maximin das Sternbild gewesen war.

Durch drei Stufen verfolgt sich dies innere Reifen am Krieg. Voraus geht bei beiden die visionäre Vorahnung. Whitman überstürzt das mitfühlende Herz. George hält gestalthaft ein plastisches Augenbild fest.

Whitmans Schmerzensvision, ein Kurzgedicht, pathosdurchflutet:

I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all oppression and shame;
I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men, at anguish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done;
I see, in low life, the mother misused by her children, dying, neglected, gaunt, desperate;
I see the wife misused by her husband—I see the treacherous seducer of young women;
I mark the ranklings of jealousy and unrequited love, attempted to be hid—I see these sights on the earth;
I see the workings of battle, pestilence, tyranny—I see martyrs and prisoners;
I observe a famine at sea—I observe the sailors casting lots who shall be kill'd, to preserve the lives of the rest;
I observe the slights and degradations cast by arrogant persons upon laborers, the poor, and upon negroes, and the like;
All these—All the meanness and agony without end, I sitting, look out upon, See, hear, and am silent.[42]

Whitman taucht herauf wie aus dem ewigen Strom des Lebens, überfüllt mit Leid. Mitten im unsäglichen Leid des Alltags taucht ihm auch das Schlachtbild auf. Das Überraschende ist die Weltverdüsterung, seinem Lebensoptimismus ganz ungewohnt.

George malt im *Stern des Bundes* 1914 eins der ersten Spruchgedichte als ausgesprochene Vorahnung des Weltkriegs aus:

Auf stiller Stadt lag fern ein blutiger Streif.
Da zog vom Dunkel über mir ein Wetter
Und zwischen seinen Stößen hört ich Schritte
Von Scharen, dumpf, dann nah. Ein eisern Klirren ...
Und jubelnd drohend klang ein dreigeteilter
Metallen heller Ruf und Wut und Kraft
Und Schauer überfielen mich, als legte
Sich eine flache Klinge mir aufs Haupt—
Ein schleunig Pochen trieb zum Trab der Rotten ...
Und immer weitre Scharen und derselbe
Gelle Fanfarenton ... Ist das der letzte
Aufruhr der Götter über diesem Land?[43]

Die Sprachplastik ist vollkommen; das Erhabne des Welt-Augenblicks überglänzt mit dem Schauer der Größe jedes Leid.

So vorbereitet erleben beide Dichter dann den Krieg. Whitman geht, als der Krieg länger dauert, nach Washington in die Lazarette; hier

[42] *Leaves of Grass*, S. 179.
[43] *Stern des Bundes*, S. 26.

strömt er seine Herzenskraft helfend, heilend, liebend durch Jahre bis zur Erschöpfung aus: sein Haar ergraut, und der Schlaganfall, der ihn 1873 trifft, leitet sein Alter ein. In diesen Kriegsjahren erst eigentlich geht dem Sänger der Demokratie die ganze Wirklichkeit Amerikas auf. Was er an der kämpfenden, leidenden, sterbenden Jugend miterlebt, wird ihm zum Gedicht ("Trommelschläge"). Das Rednerpathos ist aufgesogen vom Leid des Kriegs, das sich mit seinen Wirklichkeiten aufdrängt. Whitmans Wille zum großen Stil hat den großen Stoff gefunden, den großen Gegenstand, an dem alles ungewollt symbolisch wird. Er wird so unerschrocken realistisch, daß er Jahre lang keinen Verleger findet. Er vermeidet, was die Verleger wollen, das poetische Klischee. Ganz ungewaltsam findet sein mitfühlendes Herz das stumm die Kriegswirklichkeit durchflutende Leid, als den innersten Sinn. So der düstre "March in the ranks hard-prest," mit dem Blick auf den Notverbandsplatz in der Kirche, an dem sie vorübermarschieren. Die "vigil strange," die Wacht, die der Dichter einem gefallnen Jüngling hält. Der Weg des "Dressers" durchs Lazaret, von einem zum andern. Massenrhythmus spiegelt auch hier ein Massengeschehen, doch jeden Einzelnen anders unter der helfenden Hand, und jeder symbolisch für sie alle, allein durch die Härte des Leids:

I dress a wound in the side, deep, deep,
But a day or two more—for see, the frame all wasted already, and sinking,
And the yellow-blue countenance see.
I dress the perforated shoulder, the foot with the bullet wound,
Cleanse the one with a gnawing and putrid gangrene, so sickening, so offensive,
While the attendant stands behind aside me, holding the tray and pail.
I am faithful, I do not give out;
The fractur'd thigh, the knee, the wound in the abdomen,
These and more I dress with impassive hand (yet deep in my breast a fire, a burning flame).[44]

Georges Krieg ist kein Bürgerkrieg, est ist ein Krieg des ganzen Volks. In einer tiefsten Schicht seines Wesens fühlt sich der Magier-Priester des Maximinkultes diesem seinem Volk verbunden. Schon im *Stern des Bundes* feiert er Maximin mit der Zeile: "Du Geist der heiligen Jugend unsres Volks." Er selber als Zeitenrichter hatte sein letztes Zeitgedicht begonnen: "Ich euch Gewissen, ich euch Stimme dringe..." Welche Stellung nun nimmt er ein zum Krieg? Ganz und gar die Stellung des "gewaltsamen Idealisten": Der Volksbegeisterung der Augusttage 1914 entzieht er sich; aber 1917 erhebt er seine Stimme mit der Gewalt des Zeitenrichters: "Der Krieg." Als der "Siedler auf dem Berge." Es ist eine Art Lehrgedicht, zwölf reimlose Stanzen zu je zwölf Zeilen. Ein sprödes, strenges Werk *sui generis*. Am nächsten wohl dem, was Schiller[45] die "strafende Satire" nennt, die "poetische Freiheit er-

[44] *Leaves of Grass*, S. 262.
[45] Schiller, S. 194.

langt, indem sie ins Erhabne übergeht." Satire ebenfalls in Schillers Sinn verstanden: "die die Wirklichkeit als Mangel dem Ideal als der höchsten Realität gegenüberstellt." George geht aus vom Ideal eines reinen Deutschlands, sein Ausdruck ist überschauende, richtende Reflexion. Es entsteht so ein Kassandra-Ruf gegen die Zeit, schon als Akt des Mutes überragend. Die strafende Satire steigert sich zum Prophetenzorn der Verwerfung; was Whitman mit erschüttertem Herzen mitleidend miterlebt, gibt George die zornigen Anschauungsbilder für das Ethos, das er einhämmern will. Das Leid des Kriegs malt sich als ein erbarmungsloses Gericht an der Technik des Kriegs:

> Zu jubeln ziemt nicht: kein Triumph wird sein,
> Nur viele Untergänge ohne Würde.
> Des Schöpfers Hand entwischt, rast eigenmächtig
> Unform von Blei und Blech, Gestäng und Rohr.
> Der selbst lacht Grimm, wenn falsche Heldenreden
> Von vormals klingen, der als Brei und Klumpen
> Den Bruder sinken sah, der in der schandbar
> Zerwühlten Erde hauste wie Geziefer ...
> Der alte Gott der Schlachten ist nicht mehr.
> Erkrankte Welten fiebern sich zu Ende
> In dem Getob. Heilig sind nur die Säfte,
> Noch makelfrei verspritzt—ein ganzer Strom.[46]

Hier wohl wird am deutlichsten, was dies halbe Jahrhundert Kriegstechnik bedeutet, das zwischen Whitman und George liegt. Whitman steht noch naiv im Leid, das mitfühlbar bleibt. Georges Zeit hat das Grauen der Trommelfeuer erlebt. Der sentimentalische Dichter begreift, was Nietzsche als Seelengift des Ressentiments entdeckte, als Welterkrankung des Zeitalters. Die Formeln, die er prägt, sind von zeitlos ewiger Gewalt:

> Der alte Gott der Schlachten ist nicht mehr.
> Erkrankte Welten fiebern sich zu Ende.

Und an andern Stellen:

> Ein Volk ist tot, wenn seine Götter tot sind.
> Und Opfer steigt nicht in verruchter Zeit.

Doch die Größe des Gedichts erhebt sich über das Pathos der Verwerfung, stemmt sich der Welterkrankung entgegen, nimmt den Krieg als das reinigende Gewitter, und unwillkürlich klingt es wie Whitmans Amerika-Hymnen entgegengesungen, wenn George zum Schluß das ehrwürdig alte Europa rühmt; Deutschland inmitten:

> Wo die allblühende Mutter der verwildert
> Zerfallnen weißen Art zuerst enthüllte
> Ihr echtes Antlitz ... Land, dem viel Verheißung
> Noch innewohnt—das drum nicht untergeht!

[46] *Das Neue Reich*, S. 30.

So begegnen sich die vom Krieg erschütterten Dichter jetzt auf neuer Ebene, die Schlagworte "Naturalismus-Symbolismus" fallen ab, der Realist und der Idealist treten bestimmend hervor. Bezeichend aber bleibt es, auf welche Art jeder von beiden den Ausgriff auf die großen Mythengestalten wagt, in denen die Wirklichkeit sich zum ewigen Rätsel vertieft. Das ungeheure Leid des Kriegs ruft beiden dieselbe Gestalt des großen Leid-Überwinders herauf, die das christliche Abendland durch ein Jahrtausend durchformt hat und verbunden hält, die Christusgestalt. Doch welchen Ausdruck sie für ihn finden, darin wieder unterscheidet sich untrüglich der naive und der sentimentalische Dichter.

Whitman, der jetzt jede poetische Überformung meidet, nur ins Wort einströmen läßt, was die Kriegswirklichkeit ihm mit bittrer Härte entgegenträgt, öffnet sich in einem Gedicht ("A Sight in Camp") zum Schluß dem metaphysischen Impuls. An drei Toten schreitet er vorbei, einem alten Mann, einem Kindjüngling, zuletzt einem Jüngling-Mann, gefällt in der Kraft der Jahre, mit vollkommenem Gleichmut im toten Gesicht. Eben da überwältigt ihn der Schauer des Ganz Anderen im Alltäglichsten:

> Then to the third—a face nor child, nor old, very calm, as of beautiful yellow-white ivory;
> Young man, I think I know you—I think this face of yours is the face of the Christ himself;
> Dead and divine, and brother of all, and here again he lies.[47]

Abermals bewundern wir das Genie der Einfalt: nur der einfachste Ausdruck vermag uns zu überzeugen, daß hier das Wunder wirklich geworden, daß dieser Tote Christus wirklich ist.

Georges Lehrgedicht beruft in der letzten Strophe dieselbe Christusgestalt. Seiner erlesenen Wortkunst fehlt nur eines, das Genie der Einfalt:

> Der an dem Baum des Heiles hing, warf ab
> Die Bläße blasser Seelen, dem Zerstückten
> Im Glut-Rausch gleich ... Apollo lehnt geheim
> An Baldur ...

Die erlesne Umschreibung schwächt ab; wirkt literarisch. Die Götterhäufung: Dionysos, Apollo, Baldur zieht auch die Christusgestalt in die Bildungswelt, die unverbindliche, hinein. Georges Zukunftsethos: "Die Jugend ruft die Götter auf" verliert ihre jugendliche Kraft.

VIII

Die höchste Reife gewinnen beide Dichter aber erst nach dem Krieg, unter der fortwirkenden Erschütterung des Kriegs. Beiden wird es zu-

[47] *Leaves of Grass*, S. 259.

teil, daß sie zur wirklichen Volksstimme werden. Beide begegnen sich in der Vollkommenheit der symbolischen Gestalt. Wiederum aber in der Polarität des naiven und des sentimentalischen Dichters. Whitman steigert nur, was der Krieg ihm gebracht, den "symbolischen Gegenstand"; ungezwungen, wie einst die Volksdichtung selbst, findet er im großen Stoff die repräsentative Volksgestalt. George, in großartiger Sinn-Gebung, trifft in der Darstellung des Ideals mit dem Volkswillen zusammen.

Whitmans Gedicht ist 1865 entstanden, unmittelbar nach der Ermordung des Präsidenten Lincoln, und zu seinem Gedächtnis: "President Lincoln's Burial Hymn."[48] Man kann es als den Höhepunkt der "Trommelschläge" bezeichnen, aus denen der Dichter es herausnahm; man kann es auch als Höhepunkt der Calamus-Gesänge feiern. Es wird Whitmans berühmtestes Gedicht, das repräsentative amerikanische Gedicht. Der klassische Psalm der Volkstrauer und der Volksliebe um den "teuersten Mann." Alljährlich später bei Lincolns Todestag wird Whitman dies Gedicht sprechen und dazu die Gedenkrede halten. Hindemith hat es durch eine Komposition geehrt.

Whitmans Einsatz ist der des alten Volkslieds: ein Natureingang:

> When lilacs last in the door-yard bloom'd,
> And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the night,
> I mourn'd—and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

Schillers Aufsatz über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung beginnt: "Es gibt Augenblicke in unserm Leben, wo wir der Natur . . . bloß weil sie Natur ist, eine Art von Liebe und von rührender Achtung widmen . . . Wir lieben das stille schaffende Leben, das ruhige Wirken aus sich selbst . . ." Es ist der Adel des naiven Dichters, nie dem Zusammenstimmen mit der Natur entzogen zu sein. Whitmans Trauer um den geliebten Toten füht sich von Anbeginn als Welttrauer, an der die ganze Natur mit teilhat. Das Motiv des blühenden Flieders, des sinkenden Sterns wird den Trauergesang als stete Mittrauer der Natur und als Trost durchziehn. Und ein drittes Motiv wird sich ihm gesellen: das Drosselied, jene Schmerzensklage des verwaisten Männchens, an der einst dem Kinde der Dichterdämon bewußt geworden. Als schmerzlichstes Preislied des Todes wird das Drosselied dem Dichter in die Mitte seiner Hymne rücken. Und noch einmal wird er es wagen, den Vogellaut im Menschenlaut nachzusingen, unter der tieferen Welterschütterung des Präsidententods.

Inzwischen aber zieht der Sarg des Toten durch alle Staaten feierlich Tag und Nacht hindurch. Mit einem Mal sind wir im Massenzeitalter, die Trauer wird zur Volkstrauer, und der weite flutende Rhythmus Whitmans nimmt in die erhabne Würde seines Totensangs die

[48] Ebenda, S. 367 ff.

Massenwirkungen mit auf, unauffällig symbolisch um den symbolischen Vorgang. Erhabne Einfalt ist hier die allen Eindrücken aufgeschlossne Grundgestimmtheit: Massenrhythmus, in jeder Zeile volkssymbolisch:

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,
Through day and night, with the great cloud darkening the land,
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags, with the cities draped in black,
With the show of the States themselves, as of crape-veil'd women, standing,
With processions long and winding, and the flambeaus of the night,
With the countless torches lit—with the silent sea of faces, and the unbared heads,
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn;
With all the mournful voices of the dirges, pour'd around the coffin,
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organs—Where amid these you journey,
With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang;
Here! coffin that slowly passes,
I give you my sprig of lilac.

Erhabne Würde der Trauer ist um die stille Fahrt. Jeder nüchterne Einzelzug vertieft und gibt Sinngewicht. Der Dichter, wie eine Glocke nur, schwingt begleitend den Eindrücken nach, dem Fliederzweig, dem westlichen Stern, dem Drosselsang; dem, was alle fühlen in der Liebe um den Toten: der weiten Trauerschwingung des ganzen amerikanischen Lands. Schließlich zieht sich ihm die Trauerstimmung zusammen wie eine Wolke über der Landschaft, ein "langer, schwarzer Schatten," und er gibt ihm mit der Unbekümmertheit des Volkssängers allegorische Gestalt:

Then with the knowledge of death as walking one side of me,
And the thought of death close-walking the other side of me,
And I in the middle, as with companions, and as holding the hands of companions,
I fled forth to the hiding receiving night, that talks not ...

Es ist Allegorik mittelalterlicher Einfalt, aufschließende Tiefe des Symbols zu gewinnen, durch Spaltung in das "Wissen um den Tod" und den "Gedanken an den Tod": das Kamerado-Gefühl Whitmans als urtümliches Einverständnis mit der Welt schließt ihm diese Tiefe auf. Es trägt ihm zugleich das Drossellied zu, als die innerste Stimme der Natur selbst, die Geisterstimme vom Tod. Erlösend schließt sich im Drossellied Tod als Heilsbringer auf. "Come, lovely and soothing Death" Preis der Allmutter, die uns im Tod befreit. Trostlied allem Volk in seiner Trauer. Trost selbst über die Schrecken des Schlachtentods und der Kriegsgreuel hinweg. Trost den Müttern: nicht die Gefallenen leiden, nur die Mütter, die ihnen nachtrauern, leiden.

Hier haben sich Kriegsgesänge und Calamusgesänge verschmolzen im Bild des Todes als tröstlichen Gefährten, Befreier und Erlöser. Wer

aber diesen Trost im tiefsten verbürgt, der stille Mann im Sarg, um den die Volkstrauer ganz Amerika eint, der bleibt als die unsichtbare Mitte im großen Trauergesang gleichsam herausgespart; er wirkt unsichtbar im Todesschweigen seiner Sargfahrt allein in den polyphonen Trauerstimmen gegenwärtig. Erst der Schlußgesang gibt ihm in letzten verhaltnen Versen die ewige Würde, die ihm gebührt:

> Yet each I keep, and all, retrievements out of the night;
> The song, the wondrous chant of the gray-brown bird,
> And the tallying chant, the echo arous'd in my soul,
> With the lustrous and dropping star, with the countenance full of woe,
> With the lilac tall, and its blossoms of mastering odor;
> With the holders holding my hand, nearing the call of the bird,
> Comrades mine, and I in the midst, and their memory ever I keep—for the dead I loved so well;
> For the sweetest, wisest soul of all my days and lands ... and this for his dear sake;
> Lilac and star and bird, twined with the chant of my soul,
> There in the fragrant pines, and the cedars dusk and dim.

Welche Wandlung vom Volks-Rhetor, vom dröhnenden Prediger seines Selbst, zum Symboldichter, dem sich alle Wirkungen seines Massensangs still vergegenständlichen um die eine Volksgestalt, die selber nur als unsichtbare Kraft das Ganze durchdringt, Kraft eines wunderbaren Kamerado, eines Volksmann, wie er sein soll, dem sich der größere Kamerado, der Tod, unterordnet in einer Trauer, die das ganze Universum durchdringt. Unmerklich wird die Fahrt des Sarges durch die Staaten Amerikas zur symbolischen Heimfahrt in das Herz des trauernden Volks und der mittrauernden Natur hinein; als ein aufschließendes Symbol, in dessen dunklem Grund das Rätsel des Tods selber steht, tief einverstanden mit dem ganzen Sein.

Auch George wird durch die Trauer um Tote, wie Whitman, einer letzten Reife zugeführt. Es sind die Gefallenen seiner Maximin-Jugend, denen er nachtrauert. In einzelnen Grabsprüchen geschieht es, einmal auch in einem Gedicht mit der erschreckenden Überschrift: "Einem jungen Führer im ersten Weltkrieg"; als wäre dem Dichter 1919 der zweite schon in Sicht. Dann aber ist es der Zusammenbruch der deutschen Ehre 1919, der Schmerz um die Millionen Tote ins Leere hinein, der den Dichter in einen Zustand krisenhafter Verstörung und Trauer versetzt. Die Antwort des Idealisten ist eine Vision, die zum ersten Mal das ganze Volk umfaßt. Eben damit wird sie Whitmans Lincoln-Hymne vergleichbar. Auch sie spricht zum ganzen Volk, mit der Tiefe eines Offenbarungssinns. Man kann Schillers[49] Wort auf beide anwenden: "Nur dem Genie ist es gegeben, außerhalb des Bekannten noch immer zu Hause su sein und die Natur zu erweitern, ohne über sie

[49] Schiller, S. 174.

hinauszugehen." Das eben ist die Höchstleistung des aufschließenden Symbols. Die Einfalt, mit der Whitmans Volkstrauergesang den großen Gegenstand aufnimnt und zum symbolischen erhöht, kann allerdings seinem sentimentalischen Antipoden nicht gegeben sein. Mit der ganzen unruhig-magischen Gewalt des Idealisten stellt George seine Vision in ein gewitterhaftes Zwielicht hinein; eben darin doch trifft er für sein aus den Fugen aller Ordnungen geworfenes Volk das Kairos der Stunde. Eine Zukunftsvision, und auch in ihrer Tiefe dunkelt das Rätsel des Todes. Nur ist es nicht der Tod des Einen, in dem ein Volk sich findet; es ist der Tod der Millionen des Weltkriegs als mythische Einheit gefaßt und aufgerufen. Tote, die aus der Todestiefe heraufsteigen und fordern:

Wenn einst dies Geschlecht sich gereinigt von Schande
Vom Nacken geschleudert die Fessel des Fröners
Nur spürt im Geweide den Hunger nach Ehre:
Dann wird auf der Walstatt voll endloser Gräber
Aufzucken der Blutschein .. dann jagen auf Wolken
Lautdröhnende Heere dann braust durchs Gefilde
Der schrecklichste Schrecken der dritte der Stürme:
Der Toten Zurückkunft!
Wenn je dieses Volk sich aus feigem Erschlaffen
Sein selber erinnert der Kür und der Sende:
Wird sich ihm eröffnen die göttliche Deutung
Unsagbaren Grauens .. dann heben sich Hände
Und Münder ertönen zum Preise der Würde
Dann flattert im Frühwind mit wahrhaftem Zeichen
Die Königsstandarte und grüßt sich verneigend
Die Hehren, die Helden![50]

Eine einzige grandiose "Darstellung des Ideals" in Schillers Sinn. "Annäherung an eine unendliche Größe": das in Grauen gehüllte Rätsel der Zukunft. Inmitten stehen als symbolische Träger die Heere der Toten. Kein Volksaufbruch ohne diese dämonischen Mächte. Jeder Schritt in die Zukunft wird dadurch zwielichtig. "Unsagbares Grauen" ist in alles unlöslich eingemischt. Keine Reinigung der Volksehre wird sein ohne Ehrfurcht vor den Totenheeren; ohne das Zwielicht der darin beschlossenen dämonischen Mächte. George, der alte Magier-Priester, hat auch in dieser Volks- und Totenheer-Vision den Magierstab nicht abgelegt. Aber seine Magie gilt nicht mehr den Wenigen Erlesenen, im geheimnisvollen Teppich-Gewebe, sie gilt dem ganzen Volk. Er selber fühlt sich ihm eins in seiner Not, seiner dämonischen Unruhe. Und er fühlt sich eins mit den Toten wie mit den Lebenden. Das gibt die einmalige Größe und Würde. Ein Volksmagier, im Auftrag der Toten an die Lebenden. Alte Mythen klingen herauf: Wodans wilde Jagd, alte Symbole: die Königsstandarte.

[50] *Das Neue Reich*, S. 114 (1919).

Whitman konnte die Natur zum Trost heranrufen; in der Tiefe des allumfassenden Kamerado-Gefühls konnte er die Todesbitterkeit besiegen, die Geisterstimme des Vogels konnte ihm das Preislied singen vom tröstlichen Tod. Georges Vision ist apokalyptischer Art, im naturfernen Raum. Die aufgerufenen Toten trösten nicht, sie fordern und schrecken, indem sie reinigen. "Der naive Dichter ist mächtig durch die Kunst der Begrenzung, sagt Schiller,[51] der sentimentalische durch die Kunst des Unendlichen."

IX

Wir haben beide Dichter zu dem Punkt geführt, wo sie sich auf der dichterischen Ebene am reinsten begegnen, im aufschließenden Symbol. Sie bleiben sich entgegengesetzt, der naive Realist, der sentimentalische Idealist. Jeder trägt seinen Lebensboden mit sich, Whitman den neuen Kontinent mit seiner naiven Weltfreude, seiner Begeisterung für die Technik, die Massenzeit, die Demokratie. George den alten Kulturboden Europa mit allen seinen Spannungen, Seelenzwiespälten und Komplexen, mit der ganzen Bedrohtheit seines Volks. Beide werden jenen Augenblick der Erschütterung nach dem Krieg nicht dauernd bewahren, beide fallen wieder an ihren Alltag zurück, Whitman an die Lässigkeit des quantitativen Stils, George an seinen esoterischen Kreis. Dennoch bleibt ihnen eins gemeinsam, mit dem wachsenden Alter, der wachsende symbolische Altersblick.

Hier erfassen wir noch einmal ein Gegenüber der beiden, das gemeinsame vergleichbare Züge trägt. Beide werden zum selben Symbol des Lichts geführt, in dem sie die göttliche Allmacht umgreifen.

Whitmans großes Altersgedicht ist "Prayer of Columbus." Unmittelbar nachdem ihm ein Schlaganfall 1873 die Hilflosigkeit der menschlichen Kreatur vor die Seele gerückt, schrieb der Vierundsechzigjährige das Gedicht. (Es erschien in *Harper's Magazine*, März 1874.) Er fühlt sich eins mit dem alten Amerika-Entdecker, wie er schiffbrüchig, wehrlos, gelähmt am Strande liegt und zu Gott betet. In diese symbolische Gestalt stürzt sich Whitmans ganze Gottes- und Lebensinbrunst, und was entsteht, ist ein Monolog, eine Gebetshymne, in der sich Rhetorik und Symbolik mühelos verschmelzen. Wie Hiob steht er unter den Schicksalsschlägen, niedergebeugt, doch unbeirrbar im Glauben. Und so ist es biblische Wucht, Bild- und Wortgewalt der biblischen Psalmen, an die dies Altersbekenntnis Whitmans erinnert. Unwillkürlich durchdringt sich dabei das Amerika, das Columbus entdeckt hat, mit dem Seelenkosmos Amerika, den Whitman zu Gottes Ehre seinem Volk geschenkt. Wir beschränken uns auf die Stelle, in der sich die Gottesinbrunst zum Lichthymnus steigert:

[51] Schiller, S. 191.

One effort more—my altar this bleak sand:
That Thou, O God, my life hast lighted,
With ray of light, steady, ineffable, vouchsafed of Thee,
(Light rare, untellable—lighting the very light!
Beyond all signs, descriptions, languages!)
For that, O God—be it my latest word—here on my knees,
Old, poor, and paralyzed—I thank thee.[52]

Es ist das alte Lichtsymbol der Mystik, Gottes Sonne, die die Seele durchleuchtet. Das Schlußwort nimmt es nochmals auf als Wunder der göttlichen Hand, die die Binde ihm von den Augen genommen. Licht, das das innere Seelenlicht entzündet.

Mit solcher naiven Inbrunst, die im Licht unmittelbar Gott anruft, ist bei George nicht zu rechnen. Der Dichter des *Neuen Reichs* hat sich in seinen strengen Stil zurückgenommen. Doch überrascht er in seinen letzten Gedichten durch eine Einfachheit des Altersblicks, der sich Urphänomenen öffnet. Ein Spätgedicht von 1928 besingt "Das Licht":

Wir sind in Trauer wenn, uns minder günstig
Du dich zu andren, mehr Beglückten, drehst

Wenn unser Geist, nach Anbetungen brünstig,
An Abenden in deinem Abglanz wes't.

Wir wären töricht, wollten wir dich hassen
Wenn oft dein Strahl verderbendrohend sticht
Wir wären Kinder, wollten wir dich fassen—
Da du für alle leuchtest, süßes Licht![53]

Es ist nicht die Einfachheit des naiven Dichters, nicht durch "Gunst der Natur" geschenkt. Schon die uneinfachen Satzgefüge, die vielen Bedingungssätze deuten daraufhin: es ist geistige Vereinfachung, wie sie Schiller[54] der vollkommnen Idylle zuspricht, als der dritten Spezies sentimentalischer Dichtung (neben Satire und Elegie). Das "Wir" ist eine Art arkadisches Wir. Doch nicht zurückgewendet auf Zustände vor dem Anfang der Kultur, nicht "nach Arkadien zurück, sondern nach Elysium"; das heißt: in eine zeitlose Welt des reinen Phänomen-Sehens, wo "die Ruhe der Vollendung" herrscht. Hier schwindet alles, was den Gegenstand "individualisiert" und begrenzt. Die Sonne erfährt sich als das "Licht," ein Unendliches. Was sich im Gedicht wiederspiegelt, ist das Wir in seinen Begrenzungen vor dem Unbegrenzten. Die ehrfürchtige Haltung aber, die verborgen oder verschämt religiöse Haltung (nach Anbetungen brünstig "unterm Schauer des Sonnenuntergangs") beruft im Sonnenlicht ein unbegreiflicheres, herrlicheres Licht. So gelingt, was Schiller als das Schwierigste der vollkommnen Idylle be-

[52] *Leaves of Grass*, S. 473; dazu Canby, S. 361.
[53] *Das Neue Reich*, S. 136; dazu Werner Siebert, *Der alte Stefan George* (Mainz, 1939), S. 31.
[54] Schiller, S. 228 ff.

zeichnet: "Bewegung" hervorzubringen in der Ruhe der Vollendung. Indem wir teilhaben an diesem arkadischen Wir in seinem Hin- und Her-Bedenken, erfahren wir die Hundertfältigkeit des alles überstrahlenden Lichts, den Inbegriff: "süßes Licht."

Noch einmal begegnen sich die beiden Dichter, vom entgegengesetzten Ende her. Whitman findet für seinen Hiobs-Zustand die symbolische Gestalt, den "symbolischen Gegenstand": Columbus; Mitfühlkraft und eigne Gottesinbrunst durchdringen sich zur Identität. So offenbart sich im letzten Aufschwung die Gnade des Gotteslichts. George erfährt das Phänomen des Lichts, ihm schafft er symbolische Gestalt im Gedicht; mithilfe dessen, was Schiller[55] den "symbolisierenden Verstand" nennt; das Sinn-gebende Vermögen. Whitman erweitert sein Selbst ins Columbus-Symbol, (der Grashalm-Metapher treu); George schafft dem Lichtphänomen, dem Ideal des Göttlichen Gestalt; in der Transparenz des Sonnenlichts für ein höheres Licht.

X

Wir haben uns einer Aufgabe der vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft zugewandt, die nicht die übliche ist. Das Unterscheiden ist hier vor das Vergleichen gestellt; an extremsten Gegensätzen sollte es sich erproben. Die Rechtfertigung für die gewagte Zusammenordnung liegt in der genialen Typenlehre Schillers, die sich im Grundverhältnis hier bestätigt. Wie Schiller zu seinem kühn aufteilenden Begriffspaar: Naiv-Sentimentalisch gekommen ist durch höchste Verstandesschärfe und eine tiefe Existenznot zugleich, mit der er sich gegen Goethe zu behaupten hatte, so prägt sich am Gegensatz Whitman-George eine Weltspannung aus, in der die Kunstformen gegeneinander entwickelt sind aus dem Gesetz der inneren Form und aus tiefem Existenzgegensatz zugleich. Whitmans überwältigendes Mitgefühl mit allem und in allem, sein Masse-Fühlen, sein Natur-Fühlen, sein Gott-Fühlen, sein Kamerado-Fühlen, alles sind schöpferische Fortbildungen der Schillerschen "Empfänglichkeit" des naiven Genies. Georges herrischer Formgeist, im Abstand des masse-verachtenden Selbst, im gewaltsamen Ausgriff auf den Bund, dessen Mitte er bildet, alles entspricht und entwickelt sich aus dem Schillerschen Gegenbegriff der "Selbsttätigkeit." Dem einen droht der "Gegenstand ohne Geist," dem andern das "Geistesspiel ohne Gegenstand." Beide aber finden sich auf dem gemeinsamen Boden des Symbols. Als besonderer Beitrag zur Symbollehre wird eine bestimmende Aufgabe der vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft hier darin gesehen, das Gegensätzliche jedes aus den eignen Formwerten zu verstehen (im echt Wölfflinschen Sinn) und darüber hinaus das eine am andern zu erhellen.

Zugleich doch will Schillers Aufsatz nicht nur typologisch-ästhetisch,

[55] An Goethe, 31 Aug. 1794.

sondern existentiell gesehen sein. Auch hier stehen Existenzmächte im Hintergrund: die Selbstbehauptung des europäischen Kulturgeists im anbrandenden Massenzeitalter. Wie Schiller gegen Goethe den Idealisten in seiner Freiheit dem Realisten in seiner Objektgebundenheit zuordnet und schließlich überordnet, so bekommt Georges fanatische Durchgeistung des Lebens Größe über ihn selbst hinaus als Entfaltung eines Weltprinzips, hinter dem Schillers Werte stehen: das Heldische, das ins Erhabne gesteigerte Schöne, das Tragische. Der erkrankte Individualismus Europas hat sie entwertet. Restbestände nur sind es, die der ästhetische Symbolismus gegen den Einbruch des Naturalismus verteidigt. Die sentimentalische Dichtung, im Ressentiment des Zeitalters entartet, ausgesetzt psychoanalytischer Zersetzung, bis zu dem, was der Zeitgeist heute "Ambivalenz"[56] und das "Ambiguose" nennt, bedarf des ergänzenden Widerspruchs echt-naiver Dichtung, um sich von den aufgezwungenen Verkrampfungen zu lösen. Darin eben liegt der große Einfluß Whitmans begründet, nicht nur auf die Naturalisten, auch auf Impressionisten und Expressionisten; und es ist höchst bezeichnend, daß er am mächtigsten grade auf die Dichter gewirkt hat, die am wenigsten sentimentalisch angekränkelt sind: die Arbeiterdichter. Engelke und Lersch in Deutschland werden durch Whitman vom Klassenressentiment befreit und auf die primitive Wucht ihrer eignen naiven Einfalt zurückgeführt, die ihnen erst die Vielfalt ihrer Existenz erschließt. In der allgemeinen Symbolzerstörung der Gegenwart, dem Heraufdringen gehäufter Allegorien, neben wahren Orgien des Kriegs-Naturalismus wird es zur echten Existenz-Aufgabe vergleichender Literaturwissenschaft, den gemeinsamen Boden symbolischer Dichtung heraufzuheben, der naive und sentimentalische Dichter verbindet.

Das Besondre der vergleichend-unterscheidenden Methode bedarf noch der Rechtfertigung. Nur in lapidaren Verkürzungen war die Vergleichung durchzuführen. Immer aber bewegt sie sich von Gedicht zu Gedicht. So allein ist es möglich, auf die Existenzgründe zu dringen, die sich dem aufschließenden Symbol auftun. Methodisch ergibt sich der Vorrang des besonderen aufschließenden Vermögens vor allen aufklärenden Aufgaben, die dem Verstande zufallen. Die Wahl der Gedichte aus umfangreichem Gesamtbestand von Stufe zu Stufe kann nur jenem selben Organ zufallen, dem sich symbolische Gestalt erschließt; dem aufschließenden Organ, an dem Herz und Gefühl so mitbeteiligt sind, wie des Dichters Symbolsprache sie aufruft. Die Zwischenräume zwischen den ausgewählten Gedichten periodisierend auszufüllen, ist dann vielmehr Sache des aufklärenden Verstandes. Wir haben sie um der andern Aufgabe willen zurückgestellt. George-Hagiographen werden vielleicht nicht befriedigt sein durch die Würdigung ihres Meisters;

[56] Gottfried Benn, *Der Ptolemäer* (Wiesbaden, 1949), S. 39: "Der heutige Phänotyp integriert die Ambivalenz."

dazu sei wenigstens ein Urteil angeführt, das unsre Auffassung bestätigt: Georges langjähriger Dichterfreund Verwey[57] faßt den Maximinkult als "prophetische Propaganda."[58]

Stuttgart

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[57] Albert Verwey, *Mein Verhältnis zu Stefan George* (Leipzig-Straßburg-Zürich, 1936), S. 62.

[58] Daß die ausgedehnte amerikanische Whitman-Einzelforschung nicht berücksichtigt werden konnte, liegt in den Verhältnissen für den deutschen Forscher heute. Einbezogen wurden: Harry Law-Robertson, *Walt Whitman in Deutschland* (Gießen, 1935); Henry Bryan Binns, *A Life of Walt Whitman* (London, 1905); Henry Seidel Canby, *Walt Whitman, ein Amerikaner* (Berlin, 1947); F. O. Matthiessen, *Amerikanische Renaissance* (Wiesbaden, 1948). Einwänden ließe sich, daß George im Formenspectrum Europas nur eine einseitge Abart darstelle. Als Repräsentant des Symbolismus vertritt er den europäischen Gesamtstil in der nahen Beziehung zu Mallarmé eindeutiger als Rilke mit seiner östlichen Mischung. Von der sehr umfänglichen George-Forschung nennen wir nur die hauptsächlichen: Gundolf, *George* (Berlin, 1920); F. W. Wolters, *George u. die Blätter für die Kunst, Deutsche Geistesgeschichte seit 1890* (Berlin, 1930); Ernst Morwitz, *Die Dichtung Stefan Georges* (Berlin, 1934); Mario Pensa, *Stefan George* (Bologna, 1935) (ital.); Werner Siebert, *Der alte Stefan George* (Mainz, 1939); I. M. Aler, *Im Spiegel der Form; stilkritische Wege zur Deutung von Stefan Georges Maximindichtung* (Amsterdam, 1947); Edward Jaime, *Stefan George und die Weltliteratur* (Ulm, 1949). Zum Symbolismus: Enid Lowry Duthie, *L'Influence du symbolisme français dans le renouveau poétique de l'Allemagne; les Blätter für die Kunst de 1892 à 1900...* (Paris, 1933); Cecil Maurice Bowra, *The Heritage of Symbolism* (London, 1943). Für George in England: August Closs, *The Genius of the German Lyric* (London, 1938) (George, S. 424-436). Englische Übersetzungen Georges: Stefan George, *Poems*, rendered into English by Carol North Valhope and Ernst Morwitz (New York, 1943). Nach Mitteilung Jaimes bereitet eine englische Gasamtausgabe vor: Cyril Scott, Dichter-Komponist und Schriftsteller.

THE AESTHETIC FOUNDATION OF ARABIC LITERATURE

G. E. VON GRUNEBAUM

THE BASIC concepts which Muslim civilization formed (but never completely articulated) of the nature of literary creation and of its own literary creativeness, and which directed and confined Arabic literary endeavor in the Middle Ages, can be most conveniently described in the form of two hypotheses, the one concerned with the role of imagination, the other with the relation of content and form.

Generally speaking, mediaeval Muslim thought never abandoned Aristotelian psychology, which assigns imagination a comparatively low place, ranking it with the animal faculties.[1] Theological considerations confirmed this low estimate of man's creative abilities. Aristotle's appreciation of reason, which the Muslims shared not without some uneasiness, while stimulating the intellectual effort of subsequent ages, was likely to result in profound distrust of the irresponsible outpourings of the poet[2]—ages of reason have never been times of inspirational

[1] John Philoponos (d. before A.D. 540), through whose eyes most Muslim students were to see Aristotle, distinguishes between two kinds of *phantasia*—one that collects impressions and another that arbitrarily combines the elements of those impressions into something new. The latter kind, which in a sense comes rather close to our own concept of imagination, is subject to error. In other words, invention, "creation," "fiction" are not its function. *Phantasia* rates below *doxa*, opinion, *zann*, which arrives at the general without awareness of its causes, and, of course, below reflection, *dianoia*, and reason. See H. Siebeck, *Geschichte der Psychologie* (Gotha, 1880-84), I, 2, 355-356. John's commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima* existed in an Arabic translation; see M. Steinschneider, *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, L (1896), 395. Avicenna classed among the "uncertain premises" of a syllogism the *doxai*, *maznûnât*, the generally admitted propositions, *mašhûrât*, and the data of imagination, *mukhayyalât;* see I. Madkour, *L'Organon d'Aristote dans le monde arabe* (Paris, 1934), p. 224.

[2] The incompatibility of reason and poetry was neatly stated by Saint-Évremond (d. 1703); see R. Bray, *La Formation de la doctrine classique en France* (Lausanne, 1927), p. 121.

M. Pohlenz, *Die Stoa. Geschichte einer geistigen Bewegung* (Göttingen, 1948), I, 197, recognizes Panaetius (*ca.* 180—after 99 A.D.) as the first philosopher to have included aesthetic sensibility and imaginative creativeness among those distinctive excellencies of man which are to be considered proof that the world was created for his sake. Cf. Cicero's statement, *De natura deorum*, II, 147-48, which represents the views of the Stoic philosopher. It is becoming increasingly evident that the Stoic

artistry, as witness the character of European poetry after Descartes' ideas had taken effect in the early half of the Era of Enlightenment. Conversely, it may be added, the more encouraging view taken by mysticism of man's ability to rise above himself and to articulate his supreme emotion in his own symbols and images may be in part responsible for the continuance of mystical poetry as a growing form of self-expression when the creative impulse in the other branches of Arabic literature had long been fading.

With worth-while insights vouchsafed by revelation or, within limits, worked out by ratiocination on the basis of objective data, and with a pessimistic view of human creativeness reinforced by restriction of divine inspiration to the prophetic office and by the denial of authority to nature, invention as such and self-expression are ruled out as the purpose of literature. Beyond its role as the archive (*dîwân*) of the community, literature is allotted the twin functions of instruction and delight or, as the Prophet is supposed to have put it in two variants of the same saying, enchantment (*sihr*) and (the conveying of) wisdom (*hikma*). It would appear that, in the minds of the theorists at least, the pleasurable function came to outweigh the instructional.

In Islam, as in the West, poetry had to be defended against moral objections. Sir Philip Sidney refutes the same charges—that poetry is nothing but lies[3] and that it is the mother of abuse—with which its

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strain in the writings of Muslim thinkers has been considerably underestimated but, characteristically enough, no echo of this particular aspect of the Stoic conception of man has as yet been found in Arabic literature.

The attitude behind the distinction made by Arab critics, such as Ibn Rašiq (d. 1064 or 1071), *'Umda* (Cario, 1353/1943), I, 108, between natural (*matbû'*) and artistic (*masnû'*) poetry or between the natural and the "studied" (*mutakallif*) poet—e.g. Ibn Qutaiba (d. 889), *Kitâb aš-šî'r wa'š-šu'arâ*, ed. M. J. *Goeje* (Leiden, 1904), pp. 24 and 26—is akin to that which inspired the Hellenistic-Roman distinction between *dynamis* and *techne*, or *natura (ingenium)* and *ars (studium)* as sources of poetry. The Ciceronian *ars est dux certior quam natura (De finibus*, IV, 10) comes closer to Arab feeling than, say, Pindar's insistence on the precedence taken by the born over the taught poet (*Ol.*, II, 86-88, and IX, 100-102). The usage of the Arabic terms is illustrated by Tha'âlibis' (d. 1038) praise of an ode composed by one Sahl b. Ahmad an-Nisâbûri in celebration of the Mihrajân festival as *matbû'a masnû'a—Tatimmat al-Yatîma*, ed. A. Eghbal (Teheran, 1934), II, 110[5]. *Masnû'* (artificial) corresponds in derivation and meaning exactly to *pepoiemenos* as employed, e.g., by Isocrates. It deserves mention in this connection that another Arabic word for "to do," *ja'ala*, has like *poiein* in Greek been developed by the critics to denote "to represent, describe in poetry."

[3] Muhammad emphasizes the distance that separates his own truthful message from the *asâtîr al-awwalîn*, the Tales of the Ancients (e.g., Koran 6:25), in a manner strangely reminiscent of Xenophanes' precise distinction between the *plasmata ton proteron*, the figments of his predecessors, and his own ethically irreproachable songs (frg. B 1, 22). I. Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien* (Halle, 1888-89), I, 28-29, has collected a number of passages in which poets plead, in defense of their wine and love songs, the very words (". . . they say what they do not do") with which the Koran (*Sûra* 26:225) impugns them.

Arab champions contend rather successfully. Distrust of invention has its corollary in faith in tradition. Tradition is crystallized in rules governing scope and means of expression. For the most part, the critic would like to see originality, which is prized, confined to elaboration and modification of prefigured patterns, with the poet's vocabulary as neatly delimited by authority as are his motifs and the prosodical forms at his disposal. The fight against the Ancients that flared up in the ninth century was lost by the Moderns after some two hundred years.[4] After the eleventh century deliberate deviation from tradition still occurred, but it was done, as it were, with a bad conscience and clearly against public opinion.[5] It is significant that we find *ikhtirâʿ*, invention, listed among the *Sinnfiguren* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyya (d. 1350), where it is assigned an undistinguished thirty-first place (out of eighty-four).[6]

The minor part conceded to personal creativeness or superhuman inspiration in the genesis of the literary work of art leads to elaborate provisions for the training of the poet, who is expected to be a learned man in control of the whole fund of contemporary knowledge. It is not enough that he should be familiar with the traditional rules and conventions of his craft, *sinâʿa, techne, ars,* which the public is fond of calling a science.[7] His is to be a comprehensive and highly bookish sort of erudition, for his work will be judged on its factual as well as its formal

[4] On this fight see G. E. von Grunebaum, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies,* III (1944), 246-251. Tha'âlibi, *op. cit.,* I, 45, quotes two characteristic lines by one Abû 'l-Qâsim al-Hamawi:

"Don't compose a satirical line—no, nor a panegyrical one.
People have beaten you to anything nice or bad (you could possibly say)."

The verses are typical of the despondent mood of some of the *littérateurs* of the period, in spite of the fact that they are a good specimen of the *topos,* "Rejection of a hackneyed theme," on which see E. R. Curtius, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie,* LVIII (1938), 164.

[5] See F. Rosenthal, *Osiris,* IX (1950), 561-564. It should be noted that, in general, the Arabs did not reflect on human creativeness as a problem, be it anthropological or psychological. Intellectual productivity would be a subject of admiration but not of inquiry. Nowhere is it designated as the common characteristic of thinker, poet, and artist; and nowhere are the creative minds singled out from the merely receptive in virtue of their very creativeness. In contrast cf. the attitude of the Greeks as expressed by (Pseudo-) Aristotle, *Problems,* trans. W. S. Hett, xxx, 1 (953a): "Why is it that all men who are outstanding in philosophy, poetry or the arts are melancholic . . .?"

[6] *Fawâ'id* (Cairo, 1327/1909), pp. 156-157.

[7] See, e.g., 'Alî al-Jurjâni, *al-Wasâta* (Cairo, 1945), p. 14: *inna 'š-šiʿr ʿilm min ʿulûm al-ʿArab.* See also G. E. von Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam. A Study in Cultural Orientation* (Chicago, 1947), pp. 38-42. The Arab attitude should be contrasted with passages such as Plato, *Phaedrus,* 245A: "But he who, having no touch of the Muses' madness in his soul, comes to the doors of poesy persuaded that he will be an able poet because of his technical skill [*ek technes*]—he, I say, will remain uninitiated [*ateles*], and the poetry of the sober will vanish before that of the frenzied [*ton mainomenon*]" (Jowett's translation, corrected).

correctness.[8] This emphasis on the writer's learning the Arabs shared with the Alexandrians, the humanists of the Renaissance, and their heirs, the classicists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The ever-widening gulf between literary and spoken Arabic tended to increase the learned, not to say artificial, character of poetry in *jazl*, or high style. By an almost natural process, the need of the public for philological explanation came to be considered a criterion of poetical excellence, the indispensability of a commentary as evidence of the outstanding quality of the poem.[9] It is extremely significant that learned literature declines in Europe, and even comes to be considered pedantic, in proportion as the role of imagination in literary production is realized, faith in human creativeness grows, and writing is valued for its psychological expressiveness.

The kind of beauty which is loved and enjoyed is determined by the second hypothesis, again Aristotelian in the basic approach it embodies. This is the view that form is an entity by itself, which is somewhat arbitrarily joined to content, and that the element of beauty which lends more pleasure to one passage and whose absence detracts pleasure from another consists in "something additional superimposed upon the canvas of ordinary speech like an embroidery."[10] In other words, beauty is an ornament added at will to the treatment of a given motif. Practically all Arabic literary theory is predicated on this conviction.[11] The subject matter, the individual *ma'ânî*, or topics, severely limited per se, may be presented in different ways; al-Qazwini (d. 1338), for instance,

[8] It must be remembered that knowledge was thought of as a stable, almost static body of facts of controllable size and a thing-like texture, which becomes effective as soon as it is memorized. See the characteristic passage in Ibn at-Tiqtaqâ's *Kitâb al-Fakhrî* (written in 1302), trans. C. E. J. Whitting (London, 1947), pp. 3-4.

[9] The caliph al-Ma'mûn (d. 833) still praises a book for not needing a commentary; see Jâhiz, *Kitâb al-bayân wa't-tabyîn* (Cario 1351/1932), III, 223. In a similar vein the Persian princeling, Kaikâ'ûs b. Iskandar, defines his view of good poetry. Writing in 1082-83, he says: "If you are a poet, see to it that your verses are, within limits, easy of comprehension, and guard against making your utterances too profound. There may be subjects familiar to you but not to other people, who will need a commentary; these subjects are to be avoided, because poetry is composed for the benefit of the general public and not for oneself alone. Never be content merely with metre and rhyme, compose no verse which is lacking in craftsmanship and artifice; verse unadorned is displeasing, therefore let your poetry have art and movement." At this point a Persian commentator remarks: "In the technical vocabulary of the art of poetry, this phrase means that people reading verse may find that it flows along easily, but realize the difficulty of it when they try to compose something similar." *A Mirror for Princes. The Qâbûs Nâma*, trans. R. Levy (London, 1951), p. 182.

[10] B. Croce, *Aesthetic*, trans. D. Ainslie, 2nd. ed. (London, 1929), p. 427. Cf. the Arabic idea of the *tahbîr;* e.g., I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie* (Leiden, 1896-99), I, 129-132.

[11] Note by contrast Plato's view as succinctly formulated by A. Bäumler, *Ästhetik* (Munich-Berlin, 1933-34), pp. 12-13: Content and form are inseparable; form is content, content form.

defines the *'ilm al-balâgha* as the science teaching those several methods which are primarily distinguished according as they do or do not employ figures of speech, tropes, and the like.[12] To use the terminology of his spiritual kinsman, the European humanist of the sixteenth century, the Arab writer brings together in literary composition *res*, objects, *ma'ânî* and *verba*, wording, *lafz*. The sovereign mind masters the objects in describing them correctly. Language, mind's tool, is regarded as a permanent and fundamentally changeless system whose individual elements will, ideally at least, retain their identity, endorsed as they are by the authority of the classics.[13]

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[12] The extent to which this theory of the mechanical joining of elements which is to result in "discourse," *kalâm*, is accepted and applied is evidenced, e.g., by the genetic analysis of *kalâm* as proposed by Muhammad b. Abdarrahmân al-Marrâkuši al-Akmah (ninth century A.H.) preliminary to his discussion of the *i'jâz al-Qur'-ân*, the uniqueness of the Koran. The passage is quoted by as-Suyûti, *al-Itqân fî 'ulûm al-Qur'ân* (Cairo, A.H. 1318), II, 120, from al-Marrâkuši's unprinted commentary of as-Sakkâki's *Miftâh al-'ulûm;* see C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur* (Weimar, 1898-1902), I, 295.

"The stages of the composition of discourse, *ta'lîf al-kalâm*, are five.

"(1) The joining, *damm*, of simple, *mabsûta*, letters into words (of the) three (classes) : noun, verb, and particle.

"(2) The joining, *ta'lîf*, of these words into meaningful, *mufida*, sentences. This is the kind, *nau'*, which people use universally in their conversation and in satisfying their wants. It is called prose discourse, *al-manthûr min al-kalâm (oratio soluta*, unrythmical prose).

"(3) The joining to some of this (prose) of 'beginnings,' *mabâdî*, caesurae, *maqâti'*, 'preludes,' *madâkhil*, and transitions, *makhârij*, (the result of which) is called *manzûm (oratio vincta*, rhythmically arranged prose).

"(4) The insertion of rhyme, *tasjî'*, in the end phrases, *awâhir*, of the discourse together with all this (i.e. the elements mentioned under 3)—(this type of speech) is called rhymed prose, *al-musajja'*.

"(5) The (further) addition of metre, *wazn*, (with which the discourse) is called poetry, *ši'r*.

"The *manzûm* is used either in conversation when it is called *khitâba*, address, or in writing when it is called *risâla*, epistle. There are no kinds of discourse beyond those categories (just listed). Each of them has its own stylistic structure, *nazm makhsûs*. The Koran unites the beauties of all of them in a style, *nazm*, other than theirs . . ."

[13] For the humanistic and baroque concepts of language see P. Hankamer, *Die Sprache. Ihr Begriff und ihre Deutung im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Bonn, 1927), and *Deutsche Gegenreformation und deutsches Barock. Die deutsche Literatur im Zeitraum des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1935), pp. 145-150.

The nature of the relation (if any) between the concepts *lafz* and *ma'nà* and the Stoic distinction of means of expression, *semainonta* (literally significant sounds) and (signified) meanings, *semainomena*, or that other late classical antithesis of *logos prophorikos*, expression, and *logos endiathetos*, conception or thought, deserves special investigation. As an introduction to the Greek notions see M. Pohlenz, "Die Begründung der abendländischen Sprachlehre durch die Stoa," *Nachrichten der Göttinger Gelehrten Gesellschaft*, Philolog.-hist. Kl., N.F., Fachgruppe I, Vol. III (1938-39), pp. 151-198, especially pp. 157-158 and 191-198. One might add that Aristotle, *Analytica posteriora*, I, 10 (76B), had already distinguished between the *exo logos* and the *eso logos en te psyche;* this distinction may be inspired by the passage in Plato's *Theaetetus*, 189E f.

This outlook on the basic relation of form and content, this mechanistic idea of beauty added from the outside by the application of a certain number of technical devices, leads to the defining of originality as the improved rendition of traditional motifs and of literary progress as the sequence of such improved renditions. The inevitable consequence is a steady rise both of subtlety and of ornateness of presentation. The latecomer discovers hidden relations between the elements of the motif, notes unused possibilities for pointing it up, and tends to evoke in the hearer or reader that pleasure which we derive from the dispelling of obscurity and the apprehension of unsuspected conceptual affinities—a pleasure noted by Aristotle and Arab theorists[14] in their discussion of the metaphor, which both to Aristotle and to the Arabs is "the queen of ornaments."[15]

Thus the author will aim at surprise, *'ajab* (*ekplexis*), the extraordinary, *nâdir*, and the unusual and strange, *gharîb* (*paradoxon*).[16] When some authorities go so far as to explain the Koran's uniqueness by its *gharâba*[17] and so put the stamp of the highest approval on it, while others voice their disapprobation of the *gharîb* as unconventional and forced, the ambivalence of the term well reflects the conflict of some of the implications of the two hypotheses that otherwise supplement and reinforce each other effectively. The conflict arises when the first imposes adherence to the traditional treatment of traditional matter, while the other makes the unusual treatment of the traditional the only outlet of the poet's originality and almost the only justification of his efforts.

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[14] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III, 10; *Fawâ'id*, p. 30. The justification by St. Augustine and Góngora of literary obscurity proceeds on similar lines; see E. R. Curtius, *Comparative Literature*, I (1949), 37-38.

[15] In Croce's phrase, *op. cit.*, p. 427. The Arabic approach was, as it were, explicitly stated by Andromenidas, as reported by Philodemus of Gadara (*ca.* 110-40 B.C.), who, incidentally, disagrees with him. Andromenidas can be dated because he is quoted by the Stoic Crates of Mallus (who was born *ca.* 200 B.C. and was to become the teacher of Panaetius). This is what Andromenidas has to say (in C. Jensen's translation): "Des Dichters Zierde ist die sorgfältige Ausarbeitung der Sprache und der Wortgebung, und seine Aufgabe ist nicht, das zu sagen, was kein anderer sagt, sondern so zu sprechen, wie kein anderer sich auszudrücken vermag, und sich eine reine Ausdrucksweise und die Rhythmen und Laute und die Harmonie der Musen anzueignen." C. Jensen, *Philodemos: Über die Gedichte. Fünftes Buch* (Berlin, 1923), p. 150.

The historical context of the passage is discussed by W. Kroll, *Studien zum Verständis der römischen Literatur* (Stuttgart, 1924), p. 40. For Roman instances of the tendency to "improve" on the lines of the predecessors, see *ibid.*, pp. 167-170. In Arabic literature, the so-called *dîwân al-ma'âni*, or catalogue of topics, is the most characteristic symptom of that tendency. Ibn Qutaiba and Abû Hilâl al-'Askarî (d. 1005) are famous for compilations of this kind.

[16] Seventeenth-century writers, like the Arabs, consider as "marvelous" anything which evokes admiration through surprise, including, to quote Chapelain, *Préface à l'Adonis* (1623), "la richesse du langage" (quoted by Bray, *op. cit.*, p. 231).

[17] *Fawâ'id*, p. 247.

The same development is encountered in European *secentismo,* so well described by Toffanin as a "perfezionamento dell'Aristotelismo,"[18] whose instrument (*acutezza*) and whose result (*concettismo*), used and evolved in the service of the same fundamental hypothesis regarding form and content, are devoted to stimulating that same feeling of wonderment and surprise (*maraviglia*) which the Arab author of the later period strives to provoke. And once more it is an Aristotelian precept, the calling for an element of the marvelous in tragic and even more so in epic production,[19] which is stretched to yield the theoretical justification.[20]

Wherever—East or West—this second hypothesis was accepted, the same effects are noticeable throughout the period of its dominion. Not only does *secentismo* appear in Christian writers of the fifth and sixth centuries, to reappear again and again in the Middle Ages; the very conceits at which Arabic and Persian writers arrive are not infrequently duplicated or near-duplicated by European authors of the seventeenth century. It is instructive to compare, for instance, the imagery resorted to by Nizâmi (d. 1203) and by G. B. Basile (d. 1625) in his *Pentamerone* to depict sunrise and sunset. Similar parallels of Eastern and Western *concetti,* especially in description,[21] could easily be listed at considerable length.

With the poet's outreach rather narrowly and rigorously circumscribed by convention, concentration on detail allows for the assertion of creative freedom. Even more perhaps than the European and especially the German writer of the seventeenth century, the Arab author is inclined to let his individual observations stand side by side, with only a very tenuous connection. His longer works represent the summation of discrete scenes and events rather than their integration. Only rarely does the critic call for emphasis on the compositional scheme in preference to attention to episode or conceit.[22] Variation of subject matter

[18] G. Toffanin, *La fine dell'umanesimo* (Turin, 1942), and A. Belloni, *Il Seicento* (Milan, 1929), p. 594. F. Gabrieli, *La poesia araba e la letteratura occidentale* (Rome, 1943), p. 6, says of Abbasid poetry: "È il secentismo avanti lettera, che lentamente ammorba e disfà quest'arte preziosa."

[19] *Poetics,* XXIV, 15 (1460A).

[20] Paolo Beni, *Commentarii in Aristotelis Poeticam* (Padova, 1613), p. 4, excellently expounds the theory of ornate poetry as it would be applicable alike to the secentistic, late Arabic, or any other concettistic literature. The passage is quoted by Toffanin, *op. cit.,* pp. 235-236.

[21] The penetrating analysis of the *ingegnoso* and the *descrittivo* in secentistic literature which Croce, *Storia della età barocca in Italia* (Bari, 1929), pp. 256-258, offers applies almost word for word to Arabic and Persian literature as well.

[22] So does for instance Bâqillâni (d. 1013), *I'jâz al-Qur'ân* (Cairo, A.H. 1349), p. 190; see the translation by this writer, *A Tenth-Century Document of Arabic Literary Theory and Criticism* (Chicago, 1950), p. 111. It deserves notice in this connection that Bâqillâni's older contemporary, the great poet Mutanabbi (d. 965), bestows great care on composition and obviously intends his longer poems to pre-

within one and the same literary unit is adopted as a principle of composition, which is sometimes stated programmatically at the outset; to keep to one theme and to preserve the same serious or jesting tone throughout the work would be sure to tire and vex the reader—a striking revival of the Hellenistic-Roman craving for *poikilia* or *variatio* and its counterpart, the anxiety to avoid *satietas* or surfeit.[23] The individual phenomena are presented as strikingly and as characteristically as the poet's powers will permit, but the ultimate meaning of description is almost always the demonstration that its objects are true to type; stylistic extravagances deflect the poet's supercilious conformity with convention rather than a whimsically disguised attempt at revolt.[24]

The two hypotheses are well-integrated parts of that general mediaeval outlook on the world as a static entity, whose individual elements obtained their rank and value from their immutable position within the whole which made everything at the same time a constituent and a result of the all-pervading harmony of the universe. There is a cosmic significance in each thing's being thus and no other; willful change upsets and is likely to debase the over-all pattern of unity.

The Aristotelian notion of the particular and natural *topos*, or place, which any object possesses within the closed system of the world retains its formative power. The moral overtone of the scholastic designation of an entity's particular quality as its *dignitas*,[25] with its suggestion of a hierarchy of *virtutes* in which the particular *dignitas* or virtue holds its unambiguous rank, is met again in the Arabic expression, *šaraf*, the honor or nobility which any theme or object possesses unalterably in greater or less degree.

The hierarchy of objects is paralleled by a hierarchy of the constit-

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sent a well-organized train of thought in a formally unified structure. E. Albertini, *La Composition dans les ouvrages philosophiques de Sénèque* (Paris, 1923), pp. 314-323, discusses the reasons for the compositional weaknesses that are traceable in the classical literatures, from Plato to Tacitus. Some of his reflections on the taste of the ancient reading public could be applied to the mediaeval Muslim reader as well. But it must be remembered that the Muslim read from a *codex*, not from a *volumen*—so the mechanical obstacles to stringency of composition that beset the ancients no longer impeded the Muslim author and his public.

[23] Cf., e.g., Jâhiz (d. 869), *Kitâb al- bukhalâ'*, ed. G. Van Floten (Leiden, 1900), p. 1; *Kitâb al-hayawân* (Cairo, 1323-25/1905-07), I, 19-20, and especially p. 46; Abû 'l-Faraj al-Isfahânî (d. 967), *Kitâb al-aghânî* (Cairo, 1927 ff.), I, 4; Al-Husri al-Qairawâni (d. 1061?), *Zahr al-âdâb*—on the margin of Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, *al-'Iqd al-farid* (Cairo, A.H. 1321), I, 3. The Arab theorist encourages *istitrâd* just as his colleague of the Western Middle Ages requires *digressio;* see E. Faral, *Les Arts poétiques du XII^e^ et du XIII^e^ siècle* (Paris, 1923), p. 74.

[24] For the European phase see W. Flemming, "Die Auffassung des Menschen im 17. Jahrhundert," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, VI (1928), 405, 442.

[25] See L. Spitzer, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, III (1942-43), 20, note 17. For a clear-cut statement on the correlation of social position and personal value see *A Mirror for Princes*, p. 18.

uent parts of man himself. In the development of Arabic thought the character of this hierarchy changes decisively when Avicenna (d. 1037) substitutes for the Platonizing antagonism of body and soul (or the animal and rational faculties within the soul) the Aristotelian concept of a harmonious gradation in which, under the direction of the rational soul, all parts of the soul unite with the body to accomplish the "work," *officium, ergon, fi'l*, of man, viz. his perfection through approximation to the divine.[26]

In conformity with the spirit of this world view the Basrians, the leading school of Arab grammarians, consider linguistic correctness in ethical terms and regard themselves as judges charged with upholding a system of moral values or, at the very least, a system of rules with moral implications. Language being a true mirror of the world of objects, each sound, word, and sentence requires as an expression of absolute reason complete logical vindication of its every incidence. By conforming to the laws of thought, language is accounted for ontologically and justified morally. Thus the universe of language both parallels and participates in the immutable rational structure of the universe of phenomena and ideas.[27]

Similarly, literary forms or kinds are conceived as entities with a life of their own beyond their representation in the individual work and their preservation is invested with a certain ethical value. The theory of literature therefore consists in large measure of instructions and directions on how to write, somewhat in the vein of the Western *artes versificatoriae* and even as late a book as Opitz' *Buch von der deutschen Poeterey* (1624). The poet has the choice of theme and form and kind; but once his choice is made he is committed to the required treatment.[28]

All other motivations of traditionalism, philosophical and psychological, not only strengthen the regard for established form but find in it an embodiment of stability and correctness, as convenient as it is apt.

What is established is, however, not only the form. The material elements that constitute the universe are equally set. The poet describes their permanent structure. Variation is admissible but strictly controlled. The particular man, horse, or relationship is to be characterized as a specimen rather than an individual. The statements of the poet

[26] For the hierarchical doctrine in mediaeval psychology, see Siebeck, *op. cit.*, I, 2, 409 ff.; for Avicenna's position in the development of Arabic psychology, see E. L. Fackenheim, *Mediaeval Studies*, VII (1945), 211.

[27] G. Weil, *Die grammatischen Streitfragen der Basrer und Kufer* (Leiden, 1913), Introduction, pp. 27-28 and 7-8. Tauhidi (d. 1023), *Muqâbasât* (Cairo, 1347/1929), p. 294, records the fact that his master, Abû Sulaimân al-Mantiqî (d. after 1000), listed the logical character of its syntax among the reasons persuading him of the superiority of Arabic over other languages.

[28] For the attitude of humanism and baroque, see G. Müller in H. Naumann and G. Müller, *Höfische Kultur* (Halle, 1929), pp. 82-84.

portray, or create, so many materializations of the ideal. He is the better poet who describes the better horse. And the better horse is the one whose characteristics correspond more closely to the canon. To live the convention is to live the ideal. To make convention live or at least to assert its validity in description is the task of the classical poet. His ode is marred when the poet represents his courser as trailing its tail—the correct (though perhaps not the true) statement shows the tail trimmed just above the ground. Since the ancients had the lover halt and weep at the deserted camping ground of his beloved, the urban poets must not transfer the scene to a walled settlement. The poet may select from a fairly large catalogue of motifs and objects, *dîwân al-ma'ânî*, but he is not encouraged to go beyond it. In other words, he is not, to use Aristophanes' expression, supposed to be *phrenotekton*, building with his mind.[29]

Poetry portrays what is correct—and the unrighteous, too, has its propriety. Poetry depicts simplified and unambiguous emotions, simplified or rectified patterns of behavior and response. Its psychological categories are as strict as the gradation of its sentiments. Even excess must be truly and obviously excessive. The conventional reaction proves the genuineness of the sentiment. The baring of intimate experience in open but standardized outcry conceals what is actually personal and novel in it. In the last analysis, poetry is unrevealing and discreet. Even after the weakening of the classical ideal in the later Middle Ages, the biographer and especially the autobiographer dealt frankly and realistically only with religious development and to some extent with sensual enjoyment. Private experience is neither objectivized in action through novel or drama nor presented indirectly through the personification of virtues and ideas or through the casting of figures of history and legend to represent and express personal attitudes. There is abundant evidence for the Arab's keen understanding of man; but this is not to be found in his poetry nor, outside the religious sphere, in his confessional writing.

The failure of Platonism to enter the main stream of Muslim thought is largely responsible for the undisturbed longevity of the two hypotheses. For the last fifteen centuries every revival of the belief in human creativeness, every upsurge of lyrical self-expression or of "romanticism," has almost invariably been wedded to a resurgence of Platonism in some form or other. Arabic and Persian mysticism, permeated to a considerable extent by Neoplatonic ideas and attitudes,[30] pre-

[29] *Frogs*, line 820 (with reference to Aeschylus).

[30] Plotinus *Enneads*, IV, 4, 13, replaces the Platonic parts of the soul *logos-thymos-epithymia* with *phronesis-phantasia-physis* as levels of the world soul; H. Diller, *Neue Jahrbücher für Antike und deutsche Bildung* (1939), p. 256. The deep

served, through its belief in man's divine potentialities, the artistic productivity of its adepts and provided them at the same time with an overwhelming experience as incentive and theme of self-expression.

The pre-Islamic poet was thought to be under the direct influence of a demon, and is on occasion represented as compelled to recite by the brute force of his *jinn* or *šaitân*.[31] But the necessity to maintain a precise distinction between the inspiration of the Prophet and that of the poets prevented the sublimation of the early idea of poetry as a gift or imposition emanating from a nonhuman power after the manner in which, among the Greeks, Democritus[32] and even more clearly Plato[33] came to see in the poet the autonomous interpreter of the divine afflatus, full of the god but no longer a tool.[34]

The theological inadmissibility of human creativeness was supported by the uncertainty of the distinction in the general consciousness between creation, artistic and intellectual, and the true *creatio ex nihilo*. Taking its inspiration from a legend that had been received into the apocryphal Arabic Gospel of the Infancy,[35] the Koran[36] depicts Jesus as "creating figures like birds from clay . . . and then breathing upon

concern of the Stoa with *phantasia* does not seem to have affected Arabic ideas of creativeness.

[31] Hesiod's account of his meeting with the Muses, *Theogony*, lines 22-34, records an experience comparable in structure—though subtler and less drastic—to the encounter with the female demon to which Hassân b. Thâbit (d. 674) ascribed the beginning of his poetical activity (and which is paralleled by the method by which the angel Gabriel compels the reluctant Muhammad to recite his first revelation). The difference between the Arab and the later Greek versions of a related if not essentially identical concept is akin to that between the Homeric notion of man's decisions or changes of mind as acceptance of divine suggestions and that traceable in the tragic poets (e.g., in *Medea* or *Phaedra*, but already in the *Hiketides*) where the contesting motivations are man's own and where it is incumbent on him and him alone to resolve the conflict in action. For this development see B. Snell, *Die Entdeckung des Geistes. Studien zur Entstehung des europäischen Denkens bei den Griechen* (Hamburg, 1946), especially pp. 117-123. The same author, *ibid.* pp. 249-254, well describes the birth in Virgil and Horace of the Western poet's characteristic pride as the shaper of meaningful phantasies, the builder of an autonomous area parellel with and in a sense superior to that of ordinary life—an attitude that has remained alien to the Muslim poet.

[32] Frg. 18.

[33] E.g., *Ion*, 533D ff., *Phaedros*, 244A ff.

[34] It is significant that in the Greco-Latin tradition no work of prose begins with an invocation to divine powers, while in the Islamic tradition God is never invoked at the beginning of a poem but always at the outset of a work of prose. (Exceptions are provided only by Arabic didactic poetry and the Persian epic poets and those following in their footsteps.) To the Greek, inspiration is confined to poetical speech; the Muslim, too, is aware of its inspired character but he remains uneasy as to the extrahuman source of this inspiration. See W. Kranz, *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum, Geschichte und deutsche Literatur*, XXVII (1924), 76; Goldziher, *Abhandlungen*, I, 7, note 5.

[35] Ch. 46.

[36] Koran 3:44 and 5:110.

them so that they became birds" by the permission of God.[37] The artist as a shaper of forms is felt to be in rivalry with the Lord. On Judgment Day the makers of figures will be asked to inhale life into their works; but they will fail and be consigned to eternal punishment.[38]

Thus Muslim sentiment perpetuates the attitude expressed for the early Christians by Clement of Alexandria (second century A.D.), who taunts the "puny artists" of the Greeks with never having "fashioned a breathing image, or made tender flesh out of earth." And Clement ends by proclaiming: "None but the Creator of the universe . . . formed such a living statue as man."[39] To appreciate Muslim feeling it must be realized that, in the understanding of the period, the strictest monotheism is not of itself incompatible with pride in man and his creativeness. In his book on the *Divine Manifestation,* Eusebius of Caesarea (d. *ca.* 340) exults in the unique greatness of man, "wondering at the various excellency" of his nature. All man's accomplishments give meaning to the fact that he was created in God's image. Man's glory redounds to the greater glory of God. And along with man's control of this world, his scientific insights, his philosophical comprehension, and his ability not only to sing and speak but to analyze his music and his language into coherent systems, Eusebius expressly praises him for being "alone, of those that are on the earth . . . in his works like unto God who is over all. Any thing which he pleases will he form into animals; even this inanimate matter will he change into the form, figure, and fashion of every sort of creature." So he will "set about emulating [even] the Maker of all things, . . . shewing forth fully, by his works, the power [vested within him] of the image of God."[40]

The classical critics of the decadent ages as well as the critics opposed to the brilliant inanities of *secentismo* were frustrated in their fight against the playful cleverness of the *concettisti* because they, too, ad-

[37] Koran 5:110 (trans. R. Bell).

[38] Cf., e.g., Bukhâri, *Sahih,* ed. L. Krehl (Leiden, 1862-1908), IV, 104 (nos. 89, 90), 106 (no. 97). The pedagogical argument against the figurative arts, to the effect that images of animals and men may lead the unwary into idolatry, must be considered a secondary outgrowth of the sentiment just described. A rationalistic, not to say euhemeristic, explanation along such lines of the rise of idolatry is met with as late as A.D. 1092 (when Abû 'l-ma'âli Muhammad, *Kitâb bayân al-adyân* (in C. Schefer, *Chrestomathie persane,* Paris, 1883-85, I, 146), derives the worship of idols from the mythical Iranian king Hôšang carrying with him on his travels the statue of his departed daughter, of whose beauty he had been inordinately fond. This originally Hellenistic *topos* is, incidentally, traceable in pre-Islamic Arabia; see F. Stummer in *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft,* XCVIII (1944), 383 ff.

[39] *Protreptikos,* X, Stählin, p. 78; trans. G. W. Butterworth, Loeb Classical Library (1919), p. 213.

[40] Eusebius, *Theophania,* I, 46-62; the quotations are from ch. 46 and 61, trans. S. Lee (Cambridge, 1843); cf. also the German translation by H. Gressmann, Eusebius, *Werke* (Leipzig, 1904), III/2, pp. *62-*68.

hered to the theory that had induced the taste they would not share. The Arab critic found himself in the same position. His frequent protests against the excesses of ornamentation, against the aberrations of taste displayed so blatantly even by the best of poets, and against empty verbosity in general[41] were doomed to ineffectiveness as long as he accepted the idea of beauty as an addition from outside, of excellence of style as a plus or minus of varnish applicable to each and every motif, and of lexicological and structural conformity as the primary criterion of the acceptability of a literary product. The distortion of the notion of originality and the helplessness of the theorist in dealing with the original are well illustrated by the discussion of *mukhâlafa*, deviation from traditional motif treatment, as a word figure.[42] It is well to note that the

[41] See the characteristic remarks, *al-Wasâta*, p. 79, where Mutanabbi is criticized for *at-ta'addî fi 'l-isti'âra*. Khafâji, *Sirr al-fasâha* (Cairo, 1932), p. 180, Ibn Khaldûn, *Prolegomena*, ed. Quatremère (Paris, 1858), III, 356 (trans. Slane, Paris, 1862-68, III, 399), and others compare the "ornaments" to moles which in small quantities heighten, in large detract from the beauty of a woman's face. F. Minozzi, *Sfogamenti d'ingegno* (1641), quoted by C. Trabalza, *La critica letteraria, secoli XV-XVII* (Milan, 1915), p. 316, uses the same comparison in his argument against the exaggerated use of *bisticcio*.

Appropriateness, the *prepon* of the ancients, is invoked to check the abuses resulting from the second hypothesis. Gregory the Great (d. 604), taking his inspiration from the *First Oration* of Gregory of Nazianzus (d. *ca.* 389), elaborates the *diversitas* of expression required by different types of audiences in his *Regula pastoralis*, iii, prologue and ch. I (*MPL*, LXXVII, 50-51), by listing no less than forty-six pairs of opposites. He begins: *Aliter namque admonendi sunt viri, atque aliter feminae. / Aliter iuvenes, aliter senes.* The oft-repeated Arabic formula is: *li-kull maqâm maqâl*, to each station its own mode of speech. See also the writer's *A Tenth-Century Document of Arabic Literary Theory and Criticism* (Chicago, 1950), p. 66, note 32.

A statement of Ibn Taimiyya, the great Hanbalite reformer (d. 1328), is to my knowledge the only protest against the secentistic style of his contemporaries that suggests a realization of its causes. Ibn Taimiyya observes in his *Minhâj as-sunna* (Cairo, A.H. 1321-22), IV, 158-159, that the Bedouin orators, *khutabâ' al-'Arab*, of the Prophet's period never foisted forced rhymes on their prose; nor did they employ embellishments that were aimed solely at elaboration of the wording. But that is exactly what the *epigoni* have done. The kind of eloquence, *balâgha*, which the Koran enjoins requires the choice of such concepts, *ma'ânî*, as best conform with the topic to be discussed and of such words as will render those motifs most perfectly. Those who embellish the wording without having anything to say resemble soldiers of the faith in beautifully adorned armor who are too cowardly to fight. So it comes about that, whenever a poet exerts himself in panegyric or lampoon, he is caught in excess and untruth and will take recourse to (uncontrolled) flights of fancy, *takhayyulât*, and baseless comparisons, *tamthîlât*.

[42] *Fawâ'id*, p. 233. The fine sense of individual differences between the poets' work *bi-hasab ikhtilâf at-tabâ'i'*, according to their differences of character, as displayed especially in the ninth and tenth centuries (cf. e.g., *al-Wasâta*, p. 17), did not result in literary individualism. The sentiment voiced by 'Alî al-Jurjâni and other critics of his hue reminds one of Agostino Mascardi's (1590-1640) fight for the acceptance of the concept of individual style in the Fourth Tractate of his *Dell'arte istorica* (Venice, 1674), pp. 322-395. The passage has been referred to frequently, e.g., by Croce in *La Critica*, XXV (1927), 9-10, and *Storia della età barocca in Italia*, pp. 172-174.

Arabs never analyzed the concept of the beautiful in literature—in other words, that they never attempted to develop an aesthetic.[43] More precisely put: Of the two fundamental lines of approach developed by antiquity, they did not follow the Platonic and Plotinian tradition to investigate the nature of the beautiful but rather took up the Aristotelian problem of the nature of (literary) art.[44] Thus they essayed to formulate directives to the writer who wished to achieve the requisite level of the high style as opposed to the low *(jazl* versus *sakhîf).*[45]

Arabic follows ancient theory in conceiving of poetry and prose not as separate forms of expression but merely as two species of "discourse," *kalâm.* Thus the distinction between prose and poetry is seen only in the fact that poetry is speech bound by meter (and rhyme). Even as ancient theory had brushed aside Aristotle's definition of poetry[46] in this regard, so did the Arabic (and the European) Middle Ages adopt the essentially musicological definition of poetry, of Pythagorean-Platonic origin, which even before the Hellenistic period had

[43] This is not to say that the Arabs were unaware of the peculiar "disinterested" pleasure of aesthetic enjoyment. See e.g., Ghazzâli (d. 1111), *Ihyâ' 'ulûm ad-dîn* (Bûlâq, 1289/1872), II, 151[1-5], with regard to the love of nature.

[44] In A. Bäumler's terms—they concentrated on *Kunstlehre* while disregarding *Schönheitslehre* (see his *Ästhetik,* pp. 33 and 65-66). The failure of the Arabs to interest themselves in the beautiful as such is all the more remarkable in the light of the influence accorded to Plotinian ideas ever since the middle of the ninth century (and perhaps earlier). The *Theology of Aristotle,* a compilation by a Syriac writer of the sixth century who belonged to a circle of Neoplatonizing Jacobites, in which he uses ample extracts from *Enneads* IV-VI in Porphyry's recension—cf. P. Kraus, *Revue de l'histoire des religions,* CXIII (1936), 211-212—was translated into Arabic between A.D. 840 and 850. The *Theology* discusses "beauty" in close adherence to *Enneads,* V, viii, 1-3, on pp. 47-52 of the edition by F. Dieterici (Leipzig, 1882; trans. Leipzig, 1883, pp. 48-53). Neoplatonic ideas are reflected wherever beauty is analyzed as the cause and object of love; see, e.g., Ghazzâli, *Ihyâ',* IV, 285-287.

[45] The most succinct if not altogether the best listing of the elements of which *balâgha,* eloquent presentation, is seen to consist is owed to Qudâma b. Ja'far (d. 922), *Jawâhir al-alfâz* (Cairo, A.H. 1350), pp. 3-8. According to Qudâma new ideas will often be reached by systematic variation of the constituent parts of a given thought or phrase, as for example by the application of *'aks,* "reversal," which from "be grateful to him who benefits you" will lead to "benefit him who is grateful to you." The same *'aks* may accidentally, as it were, produce a striking and even profound sentence, as in the saying of 'Amr b. 'Ubaid (d. 761-2): "O God, give me sufficiency through need for you / and do not make me needy through (self-)sufficiency without you." Here Qudâma articulates a tendency which was to find its most perfect elaboration in E. Tesauro's (d. 1675) *Cannocchiale aristotelico* (first published, Venice, 1655), the most comprehensive secentistic guide to the invention of motifs through the systematic development of a given idea which is considered solely as an arrangement of elements admitting of almost infinite permutation, with the Aristotelian categories providing the *Ordnungsprinzip* of their variation. Qudâma's concept has been discussed by J. Fück, "Arabiya. Untersuchungen zur arabischen Sprach- und Stilgeschichte," *Abhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften,* philol.-hist. Kl., XLV[1] (1950), 81-82.

[46] *Poetics,* c. 1 (1447A).

become dominant in the classical world.[47] It is as a direct outgrowth of this view that, in antiquity as well as in the Latin and Arabic Middle Ages, artistic value is attributed to the transposition of prose into poetry and vice versa.[48] This outlook on poetry also provided the basis for such favorite preoccupations of Arab (and ancient) critics as the weighing of the question who had been "the best" in this or that kind of literary endeavor.[49]

The fact that criticism, besides being largely inspired by grammatical considerations, actually was for the most part in the hands of grammarians, confirmed the paramount position of the concept of correctness in the judging of literature[50]—a concept which is in perfect harmony with the two fundamental hypotheses and the world view within which they retained their authority.

But it was not only in the person of the critic that poetry was tied to grammar. The Arab like the ancient grammarian was charged with the double task of teaching *recte loquendi scientiam et poetarum enarrationem.*[51] The grammarian also concerned himself with prosody, which, in the West, had formally become a part of grammar since Diomedes.[52] Thus the grammarian bases his concept of the correct *hellenismos, latinitas, 'arabiyya* very largely on the authority of poetical passages (or, at least, he prefers to cull his *loca probantia* from poetry); he is the guardian of a prosody which he was the first to round out into a system,

[47] E. R. Curtius, *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte,* XVI (1938), 439, and K. Borinski, *Die Antike in Poetik und Kunsttheorie* (Leipzig, 1914-24), I, 43. Borinski points out that Dante still looked upon poetry as "fictio rhetorica in musicaque posita" (*De vulgari eloquio,* II, 4).

[48] For the Arabic theory of such transposition, see this writer, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies,* III (1944), 251-253.

[49] See Bäumler, *op. cit.,* p. 59, with reference to Xenophon, *Memorabilia,* I, 4,3; for the Arabs see this writer, *Journal of the American Oriental Society,* LXI (1941), 57, note 52. Worth noting is the formal similarity between judgments like that of Hermogenes of Tarsus (born A.D. 161), ed. H. Rabe (Leipzig, 1913), p. 389[7-9]—(poetry is a *panegyrikon pragma*; in fact, it is) *panton ge logon panegyrikotaton*—with the Arabic standard formula,. (such and such a line) is (e.g.) *amdah bait qâlat-hu 'l-'Arab.* The Hermogenes passage is referred to by Curtius, *loc. cit.,* p. 461.

[50] Most of the Hellenistic and especially the Roman critics also were grammarians (or rhetoricians) by profession. Kroll, *op. cit.,* pp. 126-132, offers interesting examples of their word-bound criticism.

[51] Quintilian *Institutiones,* I, 4, 2. H.-I. Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris, 1938), pp. 11-17, analyzes the compass of grammar as understood in late antiquity. It is of great importance that the technique of the *explanatio* of texts (*ibid.,* pp. 23-26) is identical with that of the Arabic *tafsîr,* both proceeding verse by verse, or rather word by word. One may add that the exegetical style of the Muslim remained essentially the same throughout the Middle Ages, whereas in the West from the twelfth century on the study of the *divisio* or *partitio,* that is of the composition of the text, is made the starting-point of exegetical investigation (cf. Marrou, *op. cit.,* p. 430, note 2).

[52] E. R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Bern, 1948), p. 438 =*Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie,* LVIII (1938), 444.

and moreover takes it upon himself to enforce his rulings by assuming the role of the critic. Under the influence of the Alexandrian peripatetics of the fifth and sixth centuries, al-Fârâbî (d. 950) classifies poetics (and rhetoric) with apodeictic, topics, and sophistic as parts of logic.[53] This position of poetics within the organon justifies the emphasis of the critics on the truthfulness of the poet.[54] The misunderstanding by the Arabic "Hellenizers," not infrequently shared by their Western contemporaries, of the content of the Greek concepts such as tragedy or comedy does not militate against the vitality of the classical attitudes toward literature in the Middle Ages—it is an inevitable result of the loss of facts by the collective memory. The tenet was retained when the illustration was forgotten or could not be transplanted.

The flowering of Arabic poetry in the ninth and tenth centuries, which molded its style and scope for centuries to come, coincides with the great changes in the industrial and financial structure of the Empire, which in part followed and in part accompanied the change from the patrimonial state of the Umayyads to the "rational" state of the Abbasids (a change, incidentally, which seems to have begun a short time before the accession of the new dynasty in A.D. 750). The new state, which was to be administered by trained and more or less permanent officials, needed literary men to staff the chancelleries. The *kâtib* who found himself employed in articulating governmental policies imbued the conduct of state business with a distinct literary flavor. An ornate style of increasing elaborateness came to be expected and appreciated in important documents. The *kâtib*, who was frequently of what might be called bourgeois extraction, had a considerable share in current poetical production. His participation was doubtless an influential factor in the rhetorization of Arabic belles-lettres. In fostering a prosy and oratorical kind of poetry, the *kâtib's* contribution closely parallels that of the European humanist, who, too, owed much of his cultural influence and his rise as member of a class to his usefulness to the emerging rational state in setting up and managing its chancelleries.[55] There is

[53] The five kinds of syllogism represent the methods of reasoning peculiar to those five sciences; cf. al-Fârâbî, *Ihsâ al-'ulûm*, ed. trans. A. González Palencia (Madrid, 1932), p. 27 of the Arabic text and pp. 141-142 of the Latin translation of Gerard of Cremona (d. 1187). Characteristic for poetry is the *syllogismus imaginativus*, the *qiyâsât mukhayyila*. Fârâbî follows precisely the line of reasoning transmitted by the Christian Neoplatonist, Elias the Armenian (late sixth century), as it is contained in his *Prooemium in Aristotelis Categorias*, ed. A. Busse in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, XVIII (Berlin, 1900), 116^{20}-117^{14}; cf. R. Walzer, *Studi italiani di filologia classica*, XI (1934), 5-14, especially 12-13. For the history of the Alexandrian school after the advent of the Arabs see M. Meyerhof, "Von Alexandrien nach Bagdad," *Sitzungsberichte der Berliner Akademie der Wissenschaften*, phil.-hist. Kl., 1930, pp. 389-429.

[54] For this point see Fârâbî, *Ihsâ'*, p. 26 (Latin text, pp. 139-141).

[55] A comparable situation with similar consequences obtained in the barbarian

this difference, however, between the *kuttâb* and the humanists—individual *kuttâb* were sometimes guilty of heterodoxy, but as a class they did not back a concerted effort to change the philosophical outlook of their times, whereas the humanists labored to replace church authority by the authority of classical antiquity. The poverty of the classical Arabic, that is, the pre-Islamic heritage, when contrasted with that left the humanists by the Greco-Roman Age, counts for much in explaining the very moderate inspiration to be derived from that complete return to it which the critics appear to have favored. The disturbing and stimulating effects of the influx of the Hellenic tradition on the Muslim world of the ninth and tenth and on the Italian of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are clearly comparable phenomena. But in Europe humanism, buttressed by the awakening of science and the renewal of the autonomy of the individual conscience through the Reformation, remained; the Renaissance never passed completely; whereas in Islam renaissance (not as renewal of an ancient and supposedly ancestral tradition but as upsurge of humanism, the Greek tradition, the scientific impulse, the historical sentiment, the cultivation of reason over against authority) was short-lived and followed by a period of "mediaevalism" that exhibited all the traits we are accustomed to associate with the term —among them, of course, traditionalism in literature.

The very refinement of the sensibilities, which is as characteristic of the early Abbasid period as of the Baroque Age in Europe, contributed here as there to concentration on a purely verbal achievement in literature. Variation of identical themes, indulgence in word-bound rather than experience-led imagery, clinging to rules and patterns, surrender to wit—this was the fate, growing out of its fundamental structure, that overtook Arab belles-lettres as soon as the creative impulse of that spectacular period toward the close of the first millenium subsided. Once reason was subjected, foreign traditions brought under control, and the historical sense with its compelling interest in man allowed to wane, there remained only mysticism to threaten the stability of the intellectual scene and to delay the premature withering of Arabic literature.

In the West, science and philosophy, by transforming the static world into one of dynamic motion, forced man to re-examine his position in the universe and also to re-examine himself. Astronomical gave way to psychological anthropocentrism; consciousness replaced being as the focal problem of philosophy. In this process of reinterpretation, new experiences, new insights into himself, were vouchsafed to man. Redefin-

kingdoms of the fifth century A.D. Cf. R. R. Bezzola, *Les Origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en Occident (500-1200)*, I (Paris, 1944), 4. For the *kâtib's* contribution to the formation of literary theory, see W. Caskel's exposition in *Orientalistische Literaturzeitung*, XLI (1938), 145-148.

ing the universe, he realized his creativeness; groping for a new orientation, he realized a new need for self-expression and new contents to be expressed in new forms. It is fundamentally this psychological experience which, in the later part of the eighteenth century, re-established great lyrical poetry in the West; it is its absence in mediaeval Islam which, in the last analysis, prevented the Arabs from recovering their literary creativeness.

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THE MANUSCRIPT OF HUME'S ACCOUNT OF HIS DISPUTE WITH ROUSSEAU

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AMONG the lesser works of David Hume, *A Concise and Genuine Account of the Dispute Between Mr. Hume and Mr. Rousseau* is of particular interest to the student of his biography.[1] It tells, as the title suggests, the story of his relations with Rousseau, from the time of their first friendly correspondence in 1762 up to the breach which took place in the summer of 1766 after their journey together to England. It relates Hume's numerous attempts to get Rousseau settled there to his satisfaction and his successful efforts to procure a royal pension for the French philosopher.

The pamphlet consists largely of a reproduction of the entire correspondence between the two men, interspersed, particularly at the beginning, with comments by Hume in order to acquaint the reader with what he felt to be the necessary background. When Rousseau abruptly and unexpectedly broke with him and spread the most outrageous accusations against him in June 1766, Hume felt it necessary to lay his case before his friends in Paris and, above all, before those common acquaintances who had been instrumental in bringing the two men together and who might otherwise only hear Rousseau's side of the story.

Hume's account of the controversy may be said to have taken its earliest shape in two most important letters to the Baron d'Holbach, which have unfortunately not been preserved. D'Holbach was the first to spread the news in Paris. Hume also wrote two letters to D'Alembert, which have likewise disappeared; I have, however, found translations in D'Alembert's hand in a Paris manuscript dealer's shop. There are other early letters giving the substance of the dispute, including two written to Hume's most intimate friend in Paris, the Comtesse de Boufflers, on July 15[2] and August 12,[3] and one to the translator of his *History*, the Présidente de Meinières, on July 25.[4] These reports gave only a some-

[1] For assistance in the preparation of this article, I am indebted to Professor E. C. Mossner of the University of Texas, who was kind enough to read the first draft and help me with many suggestions and corrections.

[2] J. Y. T. Greig, *The Letters of David Hume* (Oxford, 1932), II, 59-63.

[3] *Ibid.*, II, 77-80.

[4] *Ibid.*, II, 68-71.

what fragmentary description of the affair; but during the month of August Hume consolidated them into an account of eighty-five manuscript pages, of which three copies were made. Hume kept one of these, gave the second to his former chief at the British embassy in Paris, Lord Hertford, and sent the third to D'Alembert in Paris.[5] All of these copies seemed to be lost, until I recently discovered the one belonging to D'Alembert in Paris, together with the translations of the two letters to him. These papers are now in the National Library of Scotland.

These manuscripts are of particular interest since, in the course of the dispute still raging on the subject of this *affaire cèlébre* of the eighteenth century, fervent Rousseauists have expressed the darkest suspicions regarding D'Alembert's share in twisting the original account and in casting a more favorable light on the part played by Hume. They believe that the Scotsman's French friends—wilier than he was—were more adroit in exculpating him and in shifting the blame to Rousseau.

When Hume dispatched his manuscript to D'Alembert, some time prior to August 12, 1766,[6] he was not altogether determined upon its publication. However, feeling that this step might ultimately prove necessary, he gave his friend a great deal of freedom in dealing with the work. He wrote to Adam Smith, who was then staying in Paris: "Tell D'alembert I make him absolute Master to retrench or alter what he thinks proper, in order to suit it to the Latitude of Paris."[7] The eventual outcome of these instructions was a translation entitled *Exposé succinct de la contestation qui s'est élevée entre M. Hume et M. Rousseau, avec les pièces justificatives,* completed by Suard under the direction of D'Alembert and the Baron d'Holbach prior to October 6, 1766, and published in Paris later that month.[8] Only at that point did Hume, who had previously considered publication in England unnecessary, take steps to have an English account of the dispute published. He had not yet seen the French pamphlet when he approached his publisher, William Strahan, on the subject. Strahan was to find a translator and give him one of the remaining copies of the original manuscript, as well as the French published version:

> Let him compare exactly the French Narration with my English: Where they agree, let him insert my English: Where they differ, let him follow the French and translate it: The Reason of this is, that I allowd my Friends at Paris to make what alterations they thought proper; and I am desirous of following exactly the Paris Edition.[9]

This letter was written in October, but on November 4, upon receipt of the French pamphlet, Hume reversed his instructions to Strahan, asking

[5] *Ibid.*, II, 87.
[6] *Ibid.*, II, 79.
[7] *Ibid.*, II, 83.
[8] *Ibid.*, II, 445.
[9] *Ibid.*, II, 96.

him to follow the text of the English manuscript exactly, except for a few minor additions, and to draw upon the *Exposé succinct* only for the notes appended to Rousseau's letter of July 10, which is actually the most important document contained in the entire pamphlet.[10] Hume repeated his instructions to Strahan on November 13,[11] but they were apparently not heeded; as a result, Hume voiced the strongest indignation in a letter which he wrote to his publisher on November 25, when he had received the printed English text.[12]

It is not my intention to elaborate here on the differences between the *Exposé succinct* and the *Concise Account* and on the considerations which may have dictated them, but simply to state the facts that emerge from the study of the underlying original manuscript. This manuscript, which is the subject of the present paper, is in the hand of a copyist, but the marginal notes, which are for the most part comments on Rousseau's long letter of July 10, 1766, are in Hume's hand. There is also one note in French, marked "Note de M. d'Alembert," bearing out the fact that this is the manuscript forwarded by Hume to the Frenchman. It must, however, be stated that, except for this one note, there is no trace of any corrections by the French editors and no insertion of the footnotes which distinguish the French published text. What presumably happened is that D'Alembert read over the manuscript cursorily, which explains the lack of any other comment; and only after Suard had completed his translation did D'Alembert and D'Holbach avail themselves of Hume's authority to alter the original text and notes.

The most striking difference between the manuscript and the published versions, one completely in French and the other completely in English, is that in the manuscript the correspondence between Hume and Rousseau, which occupies the greater part of the work, is left in the original languages—that is, Hume's letters are in English and Rousseau's in French, while the connecting text is in English. The name of the Marquise de Verdelin, omitted from the French edition at her request, is given and that of the Comtesse de Boufflers is carefully erased; as we know from Hume's indignant letter to Strahan,[13] the English editor very indiscreetly managed to read through the erasure which the author had made in all the handwritten copies.

The first question that arises, and which can now be answered, though with some caution, is whether the English editor retranslated the text connecting the letters from the French or followed the English manuscript where there were no material differences, as Hume had directed. The answer is, I believe, that he retranslated from the French

[10] *Ibid*, II, 99-100.
[11] *Ibid.*, II, 107-108.
[12] *Ibid.*, II, 112.
[13] *Ibid.*

in the earlier part of the account, probably because Becket, to whom Strahan entrusted the printing, received a copy of the French pamphlet before Hume's manuscript reached him. This is borne out by the fact that the phrase: "M. Rousseau s'est mépris,"[14] is ridiculously mistranslated as: "Mr. Rousseau is contemptible,"[15] although the manuscript says "mistaken."[16] In spite of Hume's instructions to Strahan to follow his manuscript, except in cases where the French pamphlet conveyed a different meaning, a comparison of the very first paragraph in the two English versions will show that the English published text is altogether translated from the French.

MANUSCRIPT:

The beginning of my connexions with M. Rousseau was in 1762, when he was outlaw'd (decreté) in France by a Sentence of the Parliament. I then received a letter from a person of merit at Paris, informing me that Mr. Rousseau intended to go over to England for Protection, and recommending him to my good Offices. I lived at that time in Edinburgh; But supposing that he had arrived in London according to his intentions, I wrote *in the warmest terms* to several of my friends in that City, bespeaking their favour for that Exile, and I wrote also to M. Rousseau himself, assuring him of my utmost zeal in his service; inviting him to Edinburgh, if that Place should suit him; and offering him a Retreat in my House, as long as he would deign to share it with me. There needed no other motive for this *Act of Beneficence* than the personal character given of him by the Person who recommended him, and his well known Genius and Talents, joined to his misfortunes, misfortunes which seemed entirely to proceed from *the freedom of his philosophic spirit, and the Jealousy of Persons in authority;* I received the following answer.[17]

PRINTED TEXT:

My connection with Mr. Rousseau began in 1762, when the Parliament of Paris had issued an arret for apprehending him, on account of his *Emilius*. I was at that time at Edinburgh. A person of great worth wrote to me from Paris, that Mr. Rousseau intended to seek an asylum in England, and desired I would do him all the good offices in my power. As I conceived Mr. Rousseau had actually put his design in execution, I wrote to several of my friends in London, recommending this celebrated exile to their favour. I wrote also immediately to Mr. Rousseau himself; assuring him of my desire to oblige, and readiness to serve him. At the same time, I invited him to come to Edinburgh, if the situation would be agreeable, and offered him a retreat in my own home, so long as he should please to partake of it. There needed no other motive to excite me to this *act of humanity*, than the idea given me of Mr. Rousseau's personal character, by the friend who had recommended him, his well-known genius and abilities, and above all, his misfortunes; *the very cause of which was an additional reason to interest me in his favor.* The following is the answer I received.[18]

[14] *Exposé succinct de la contestation qui s'est élevée entre M. Hume et M. Rousseau, avec les pièces justificatives.* (London [? Paris], 1766), p. 52.

[15] *A concise and genuine account of the dispute between Mr. Hume and M. Rousseau: with the letters that passed between them during their controversy. As also the letters of the Hon. Mr. Walpole, and Mr. D'Alembert, relative to this extraordinary affair. Translated from the French* (London, 1766), p. 38.

[16] MS, p. 40.

[17] MS, pp. 1-2. Italics mine.

[18] *Concise Account*, pp. 1-2. Italics mine, except the first.

It is not necessary to quote the French published text; it will be obvious to anyone who will look it up that the English editor translated it almost literally, even where the French does not materially differ from the manuscript.

As can be seen from the above quotations, there are several significant differences between the two English versions. The glowing terms in which Hume speaks of his own conduct towards Rousseau have been toned down in the printed text and, at the end, a passage that might give offense to the French authorities has been changed. Other cases of the softening or elimination of Hume's self-congratulatory observations may be cited. Thus we read on p. 7 of the manuscript: "But, besides the intention of employing my time and care in M. Rousseau's establishment, I had beforehand been contriving methods of serving him in the most effectual manner." This becomes in the published account: "Not that I had deferred till this time my endeavours to be useful to Mr. Rousseau."[19] Similarly, we find a little further down: "I proposed a scheme, to which I myself intended to contribute, and by which M. Rousseau should be assisted without knowing it."[20] In the published version this reads: "At the same time, I proposed to them a scheme, by which he might be relieved, without suspecting any thing of the matter."[21] In one of the footnotes to Rousseau's long letter of July 10, Hume had originally said: "Ever since M. Rousseau's Rupture with me, I have employed my good Offices with Mr. Davenport to continue the same charitable care of his unhappy guest."[22] This eventually becomes: "Mr. Rousseau forms a wrong judgment of me, and ought to know me better. I have written to Mr. Davenport, even since our rupture, to engage him to continue his kindness to his unhappy guest."[23]

There are also significant changes in Hume's comments on Rousseau. In the manuscript, he is plainly beside himself at Rousseau's behavior, and expresses himself bluntly and forcibly. The published account cannot exactly be said to show much charity toward Rousseau's diseased imagination, but Hume is now more master of himself and shows greater restraint. Frequently the reader becomes conscious of a cold irony, which is more typical of the *philosophes* than of Hume. Thus, referring to Rousseau's letter to the mathematician, Clairaut, picturing himself as almost destitute, the manuscript reads:

I know at present with certainty, that this pretence of extreme poverty and distress was entirely groundless, in M. Rousseau, and was nothing but *an instance of Quackery, of a piece with many others of the same kind practiced by him, in order*

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[20] MS, pp. 9-10.
[21] *Concise Account*, pp. 9-10.
[22] MS, p. 43.
[23] *Concise Account*, p. 41.

to render himself remarkable and interesting, and to excite the commiseration of the public.[24]

The published text is both more restrained and concise:

It is with reluctance I say it, but I am compelled to it; I now know of a certainty that this affection of extreme poverty and distress was a mere pretence, *a petty kind of imposture which Mr. Rousseau successfully employed* to excite the compassion of the public . . .[25]

In the same way, Hume's original description of himself as the victim of Rousseau's "rage and malevolence"[26] becomes, following the French translation, "the victim of this unhappy disposition,"[27] and in a reference to Rousseau's "present criminal conduct"[28] the second adjective is suppressed.[29] According to the manuscript Rousseau read Walpole's King-of-Prussia letter with "extreme rage";[30] in the published version this becomes an "excess of sensibility."[31] In one of his footnotes to Rousseau's letter of July 10 Hume exclaimed: "What a black mind";[32] in the published text he is made to remark drily: "Thus am I accused of treachery."[33] The footnotes to this letter are particularly abusive in the manuscript. Hume singled out Rousseau's most exceptionable statements and called them twelve lies, which he proceeded to introduce tersely: "First lye," "second lye," etc. On one passage where Rousseau returned to the charge that he had given Hume every opportunity to realize that he was suspected of treachery, Hume's original comment read: "A Repetition of the fourth Lye, and consequently equivalent to a sixth."[34] In the *Concise Account* he states in a more factual way: "All this hangs upon the fable he had so artfully worked up, as I before observed."[35]

One footnote must be given special mention; here the French editors found it necessary to enlarge upon the theme of Hume's comment. Where Rousseau attributed the publication in England of the King-of-Prussia letter to the treason of a false friend, obviously meaning Hume, Hume had originally observed:

How innocent I am of every thing that regards this feigned Letter of the King of Prussia appears from Mr. Walpole's Letter annexed. The Publication of the King of Prussia's Letter was unavoidable after Copies had been dispersed in Paris and in London.[36]

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[24] MS, p. 8. Italics mine.
[25] *Concise Account,* pp. 8-9. Italics mine.
[26] MS, p. 18.
[27] *Concise Account,* p. 19.
[28] MS, p. 82.
[29] *Concise Account,* p. 90.
[30] MS, p. 22.
[31] *Concise Account,* p. 23.
[32] MS, p. 49.
[33] *Concise Account,* p. 50.
[34] MS, p. 54.
[35] *Concise Account,* p. 56.
[36] MS, p. 57.

This footnote eventually read:

> This *false friend,* is, undoubtedly, myself. But what is the treachery? What harm have I done, or could I do to Mr. Rousseau? On the supposition of my entering into a project to ruin him, how could I think to bring it about by the services I did him? If Mr. Rousseau should gain credit, I must be thought still more weak than wicked.[37]

Certain of Hume's indignant and spontaneous exclamations on reproducing Rousseau's charges against him are not given in the published texts at all. Where Rousseau first mentioned the scene at Senlis and Hume's ominous exclamation; "Je tiens Jean-Jacques Rousseau," Hume had originally commented: "This is a preparation to his twelfth Lye: But we shall be indulgent to him: We shall not count it for a Lye apart."[38] Referring to Rousseau's assertion that, in writing the King-of-Prussia letter, Walpole had merely acted as D'Alembert's mouthpiece, Hume had stated: "Mr. Walpole assures me, that he never was more than once in Company with Mr. Dalembert, and never exchanged three words with him in his Life."[39] Where Rousseau tried to make out that Hume's attempt to procure a pension for him was just another instance of his treachery, Hume had remarked: "It appears, however, that the only preceding Proofs of my Treachery, are my unlucky Countenance, and the Publication of the King of Prussia's Letter by the Printer of the St. Jame's Chronicle!"[40]

The last of the suppressed footnotes from the manuscript is also one of the most interesting in its appraisal of Rousseau's character. When Rousseau repeated his earlier statement that he had already made it clear on the eve of his departure for Wootton that he suspected Hume of treason, Hume commented, in accordance with his first reaction that Rousseau was not so much mad as wicked:

> A new Repetition of the fourth Lye: but we shall also give this to the dozen. Yet this Letter was sealed with Mr. Rousseau's usual Motto, *Vitam impendere vero.* Did ever any body yet know a Pretender to superior Virtue, that had common Honesty?[41]

As against these statements, found only in the manuscript, there are quite a few observations concerning Rousseau's letter of July 10 that were obviously introduced by the French editors. An example—although one of minor importance—is the very sentence that introduces the text of this letter and which refers to the footnotes.[42] Rousseau's reference to D'Alembert as his enemy was originally not commented on at all by Hume. However, as pointed out above, the manuscript con-

[37] *Concise Account,* p. 61.
[38] MS, p. 56.
[39] MS, p. 59.
[40] MS, p. 60.
[41] MS, p. 71.
[42] *Concise Account,* p. 33.

tains one French footnote in another handwriting, marked "Note de Mr. D'Alembert," which reads as follows:

Voici la verité. Je savois que Mr. Rousseau avoit reçu tres froidement un de mes amis, Mr. Watelet; il m'etoit revenu d'ailleurs quelque chose de lui sur mon compte, par où je jugeois, sans savoir pourquoi, qu'il ne m'aimoit pas. Cependant je priai Mr. Hume de lui demander s'il seroit bien aise de me voir. Quelques jours après Mr. Hume me dit qu'il n'osoit me le conseiller, parceque Mr. Rousseau etoit de si mauvaise humeur, qu'il paroissoit excedé des visites qu'il recevoit. j'en restai là et ne fis plus rien dire à Mr. Rousseau.[43]

In the published English text this note has been considerably shortened and is attributed to Hume: "Mr. Rousseau declares himself to have been fatigued with the visits he received; ought he therefore to complain that Mr. d'Alembert, whom he did not like, did not importune him with his?"[44]

Similarly, the footnote regarding Hume's relations with Voltaire, Tronchin, and D'Alembert appears to be an interpolation of the French editors. The special compliment paid to D'Alembert was presumably written by D'Alembert himself: "Of Mr. D'Alembert's friendship, indeed, I am proud to make a boast."[45]

If, in the account given to the public, D'Alembert was eager to be known as Hume's friend, he was equally anxious that Walpole, towards whom his feelings were none too friendly, should not emerge too well. Here he took liberties of which Hume expressed disapproval in his letters to Walpole,[46] although his instructions reached the printer too late to allow him to correct in the English version the impression conveyed by D'Alembert. The passage which follows the insertion of the King-of-Prussia letter runs in the manuscript:

This letter was wrote by the Hon.ble Horace Walpole, above three weeks before my departure from Paris, but M. Walpole tho' he lived in the same inn with me, and tho' we saw one another often, yet from a delicacy to me, *very suitable to his usual humanity and politeness*, had *entirely suppressed* the Piece. After my departure, he showed it to some of his friends; *a copy was stolen:* [under this word, "taken" has been erased.] *The poignancy of the satyre, and the justness of the application pleased everybody*: *It had great success at Paris*: Copies were multiplyed and dispersed all over Europe. I saw it for the first time at London, where it was in everybody's hands.[47]

Hume had previously expressed strong disapproval of this letter,[48] in which Walpole had assumed the name of the King of Prussia in order to mock Rousseau's misfortunes; but at the time when he composed his account he was still smarting under the abuse just heaped upon him

[43] MS, p. 56.
[44] *Concise Account*, p. 59, based on *Exposé succinct*, p. 78.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[46] Greig, *op. cit.*, II, 109.
[47] MS, p. 20. Italics mine.
[48] Greig, *op cit.*, II, 10, 49.

by Rousseau, and apparently felt that the satire was richly deserved. D'Alembert, however, considered the epistle an unnecessary and cruel joke and, correctly anticipating an unfavorable reaction from French readers, altered the text.

It has already been pointed out that the editing of the *philosophes* makes Hume's tone more coldly ironical than it had originally been. There is less abuse and more sarcasm heaped on Rousseau's oratory in his letter of July 10. An instance of this is the footnote on p. 42 of the *Concise Account*, which originally ran as follows: "Such Effects of a diseased Imagination! For, as he confesses, that he has no Connexions nor Commerce with anybody, all this comes from his own Imagination."[49] The published footnote is much more elaborate; the concluding quip, "If Mr. Rousseau could have seen things exactly as they are, he would have seen that he had no other friend in England but me, and no other enemy but himself,"[50] is strictly an invention of Hume's French friends. Similarly, where Rousseau tells of Hume's supposed soliloquy at the inn in Senlis and of its effect on him, Hume had originally only exclaimed indignantly in his footnote: "Without Scruple, I may set down this as the twelfth Lye, and a swinging one it is."[51] The note of stinging sarcasm in the footnote of the published version is not Hume's at all:

> I cannot answer for every thing I may say in my sleep, and much less am I conscious whether or not I dream in French. But pray, as Mr. Rousseau did not know whether I was asleep or awake, when I pronounced those terrible words, with such a terrible voice, how is he certain that he himself was well awake when he heard them?[52]

In some instances, the French translators are more faithful to the manuscript than Hume's English editor, who suppressed a few footnotes in his turn. Thus we find in the manuscript, at the very outset of Rousseau's letter of July 10, the following comment: "First Lye; Mr. Rousseau never gave me an Opportunity of demanding an Explanation. If he ever entertained any of these black and absurd Suspicions, of which this Letter is so full, he always kept them to himself as long as we lived together."[53] This footnote figures in the *Exposé succinct*, but not in the *Concise Account*.

Regarding Rousseau's claim that he had said in Hume's presence before he left for Wootton, "If Hume is not the best of men, he must be the worst," we find this comment in the manuscript: "This is a fourth Lye the most studyed and most premeditated of the whole. See

[49] MS, p. 43.
[50] *Concise Account*, p. 42.
[51] MS, p. 70.
[52] *Concise Account*, p. 79.
[53] MS, p. 37.

my subsequent Letter to Mr. Rousseau page 74."[54] In the *Exposé succinct,* the comment figures in the following form: "Tout le dialogue de cette scène est artificieusement concerté pour préparer & fonder une partie de la fable tissue dans cette Lettre. On verra ce que j'ai à dire sur cet article dans ma Réponse à M. Rousseau."[55] The whole passage is omitted from the *Concise Account.*

In conclusion, it can now be stated that, while the difference between Hume's manuscript and the published version of the *Concise Account* is considerable (as a matter of fact, there are few sentences that are identical), this is primarily the result of the peculiar way in which the latter originated, namely, as a retranslation from the French translation. There is also a decided discrepancy in tone, chiefly as regards marginal comment; this is the difference between a man sitting down in a rage immediately after a violent quarrel and giving his version of it, and the same man taking a cooler and more detached view of the whole affair three months later, after he had taken counsel from his friends. It is true that it was D'Alembert who first toned down the observations on Rousseau's conduct; but, after looking at the matter less passionately, Hume was willing to accept his corrections. He thanked Suard on November 5, 1766 for the pains which he had taken with the French translation and added: "You and M. Dalembert did well in softening some Expressions, especially in the Notes; and I shall take care to follow these Corrections in the English Edition."[56]

The important fact that emerges from a study of the manuscript—and this may be somewhat disappointing to some fervent Rousseauists—is that no circumstances of the quarrel as Hume saw it have been in any way altered or suppressed by some Machiavellian contrivance of Hume's friends. It is exactly the same story told more calmly, and Hume and D'Alembert stand completely absolved from any charge of bad faith.

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[54] MS, p. 50.
[55] *Exposé succinct,* p. 70.
[56] Greig, *op. cit.,* II, 102.

A REINTERPRETATION OF "THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER"

LEO SPITZER

> When the mill of the poet starts grinding, do not attempt to stay it; for he who understands us will also know how to forgive us.—Goethe.

EDGAR ALLEN POE fares badly at the hands of contemporary critics, if we may judge from the treatment given "The Fall of the House of Usher" by such subtle commentators as Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren in their *Understanding Fiction* (New York, 1943). It may be worth while to reanalyze this little masterpiece and then to elucidate Poe's artistry still further by considering it from a comparatist viewpoint.

Let us first assume the strictures made by Messrs. Brooks and Warren against this "story of horror." "The Fall of the House of Usher," they hold, is "within limits, rather successful in inducing in the reader the sense of nightmare," but "horror for its own sake" cannot be aesthetically justified unless the horror, of true tragic impact (Macbeth, Lear), "engages our own interest." Poe's protagonist, Roderick Usher, fails to engage our imaginative sympathy; "the story lacks tragic quality, even pathos." Poe has narrowed the fate of his principal character to a "clinical case" which we the readers (and also the narrator) view from without. "Free will and rational decision" exist neither in the protagonist nor in the story. Roderick—it is his story alone, not that of his sister, the lady Madeline—does not struggle as he should against the doom embodied in his decaying house. Poe has "played up" the sense of gloom excessively, no doubt because of "his own morbid interest in the story."[1]

These are severe words from sensitive writers who in the same volume justly extoll Faulkner and Kafka, often for proceeding in the same manner as Poe. We are asked to admire the logical and methodical behavior of the protagonist in Faulkner's story, "A Rose for Emily,"

[1] For critics who have always proclaimed the self-sufficiency of the literary work of art, this is a strange relapse into the "biographical fallacy"—premature recourse to the empirical biography of the writer *before* the literary work has been carefully analyzed.

as being worth both our interest and our pity, whereas Poe's portrayal of logic and method in madness should not win our interest for Roderick. Again, while Emily's crime of murder is explained by our critics as a consequence of her isolation from the world and her disregard for the limits between reality and imagination, Roderick's action is not to be explained in their eyes by similar motives—in fact, this possibility is specifically excluded.[1a] And here it is striking to note the fact that, contrary to their usual practice, Brooks and Warren fail to analyze the developments in our story in their (pseudo-)logical concatenation, but are satisfied to offer us a general statement about Roderick's "vague terrors and superstitions," in which he indulges without "real choice."

We must then follow out in detail the carefully wrought concatenation of events which Poe has achieved in our story. I would contend that, far from being only the story of Roderick Usher, our story is, as the title indicates, that of "the House of Usher" (a "quaint equivocal appellation," as Poe tells us, because it embraces both the family and the mansion of the Ushers). Roderick and his sister Madeline, both of them unmarried and childless, are the last scions of the family. Although Roderick is portrayed as the principal actor in the story and Madeline as a shadow, glimpsed passing with "retreating steps" only once before her death, Madeline is still a deuteragonist in her own peculiar right, on the same level with her brother. The fact that she is on stage only for a short time and has no lines to speak (only "a low moaning cry" at the moment of death is granted her) should not lead us to underrate her importance, given her impact in the story and the interest which is aroused precisely by her mysterious appearances.

Roderick and Madeline, twins chained to each other by incestuous love, suffering separately but dying together, represent the male and the female principle in that decaying family whose members, by the law of sterility and destruction which rules them, must exterminate each other; Roderick has buried his sister alive, but the revived Madeline will bury Roderick under her falling body. The "fall" of the House of Usher involves not only the physical fall of the mansion, but the physical and moral fall of the two protagonists. The incestuous and sterile love of the last of the Ushers makes them turn toward each other

[1a] Our critics obviously appreciate, as would any American reader, the resistence to doom shown by Emily Grierson more than Roderick Usher's submissiveness to doom. But does their historical sense not tell them that Poe's attempt at exploration of the "attitude of doomedness" (or "le besoin de la fatalité," as Charles Dubos called it in Byron) was at the time a new step forward in the psychological study of hitherto neglected recesses and arcana of the human mind—an adventure, as D. H. Lawrence has said, "into vaults and cellars and horrible underground passages of the human soul" (quoted by Professor N. B. Fagin, *The Histrionic Mr. Poe*, Baltimore, 1949, p. 157)?

instead of mating, as is normal for man and woman, with blood not their own. Within the mansion they never leave, they live in an absolute vacuum.[2] In contrast to the gay comings and goings depicted in the poem recited by Roderick ("The Haunted Palace"), which reflects the former atmosphere of the mansion, we are shown only an insignificant valet of "stealthy step" and a suspect, cunning, and perplexed family physician with a "sinister countenance" (it is quite logical that Roderick, after the supposed death of his sister, should wish to keep her body as long as possible in the mansion, away from the family burial ground "exposed" to the outside world, away also from the indiscreet questions of the inquisitive physician).

As to Madeline, although her physical weakness is great and she is subject to catalepsy, she does resist the curse that is weighing down the family. "Hitherto she had steadily borne up against the pressure of her malady"; and at the moment of death she shows superhuman strength: "the rending of her coffin, and the grating of the hinges of her prison, and her struggles within the coppered archway of the vault" are compared by Roderick to "the breaking of the hermit's door, and the death-cry of the dragon, and the clangor of the shield"—the feats, that is, of the doughty knight Ethelred in the romance of chivalry being read to Roderick by the narrator. Surely "the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher," as she is presented to us in an apotheosis of majesty in death, this female Ethelred returning, blood-stained, as a "conqueror" from *her* battle with the dragon (a battle that broke the enchantment of death), is the true male and last hero of the House of Usher, while her brother has in the end become a figure of passivity whose body is reduced to a trembling mass. If Roderick is the representative of death-in-life and of the death wish, Madeline becomes in the end the embodiment of life-in-death, of the will to live, indeed of a last, powerful convulsion of that will in the dying race of the Ushers.[3]

[2] Indeed it may be said that the invitation extended to the narrator by Roderick (the "vivacious warmth" and the "perfect sincerity" of whose greeting are stressed by the author) represents the last faint surge of vitality in Roderick—the desire (hysterical as are all his impulses; he writes the invitation in a "wildly importunate way") to fill his life with some content in anticipation of the death of his sister. That Roderick had wrestled before with the idea of death is shown by his reading habits. Among the books of his choice are those centered somehow around the concept of liberation (the *Ververt* and *Chartreuse* of Gresset, the *Journey into the Blue Distance* of Tieck, *The City of the Sun* of Campanella), including liberation in respect to sex (the *Belphegor* of Machiavelli, Pomponius Mela's writings on the "Satyrs and Aegipans").

[3] Madeline, in spite of her significant part in the plot, is seen by the narrator and presented to the reader only as a picture—the picture of a young woman dying at the acme of her beauty—a motif hallowed by the tradition of Renaissance literature (Poliziano, Lorenzo il Magnifico, Ronsard, Garcilaso).

But what force moves Roderick to start the process of self-destruction? Terms such as "clinical case," "vague terrors and superstitions," may perhaps debar us from deeper psychological insight. From the beginning Poe has made it clear that he will deal in our story with the psychological consequences of fear. When the visitor who is telling us the story receives his first glimpse of the decaying mansion, he turns, in order to divert his attention from the sinister sight, toward the tarn, only to see, with growing anguish, the dreary building reflected in its waters (a foreshadowing of the end of the story when these waters will close over the debris of the mansion)—and he writes the following significant words: "There can be no doubt that the consciousness of the rapid increase of my superstition . . . served mainly to *accelerate* the increase itself. Such, I have long known, *is the paradoxical law* of all sentiments having *terror* as a basis."[4] The psychological law formulated here by Poe (fear increased by consciousness of fear) is valid especially for the monomaniac Roderick who, throughout the story, is conscious of his "folly." At the beginning he explains to the narrator: "I shall perish . . . I *must* perish in the deplorable folly . . . I have, indeed, no abhorrence of danger, except in its absolute effect—in terror . . . I feel that the period will sooner or later arrive when I must abandon life and reason together, in some struggle with the grim phantom, FEAR." And at the end he is described as "a victim to the terrors he had *anticipated*." Fear is indeed a passion or a hysteria that accelerates and anticipates. What our story "teaches"—and I wonder why our critics disregarded the capitalized word FEAR which should have suggested to them a "lesson"—is that fear, by anticipating terrible events, has a way of bringing about prematurely those very events. And, since we all are subject to fears, I do not understand how Poe's story should be lacking in general human interest.

Roderick fears the death of Madeline because this "would leave him (him, the hopeless and the frail) the last of the ancient race of the Ushers." The degeneracy of that race manifests itself in the overcon-

[4] Italics mine.—Our critics do not take up the question of the role of this visitor who is the narrator (except to deplore his lack of sympathy, understanding, and information in regard to Roderick, whom he seems to treat, according to our critics, as "a clinical case"). But his function is not that of interpreting Roderick to us, of making us "take him seriously as a real human being," but of serving to objectify the *fears* harbored by Roderick. When a person mainly rational and scientific in his approach to occult phenomena (note his remark about the "merely electrical phenomena" in which Roderick sees "appearances"), who is able to recount the events he has witnessed with such elaborate detail and such poise, is "contagiously infected" by the atmosphere of the mansion and by Roderick's "vague terrors," these terrors become thereby less vague and acquire objective reality. It was in order to make real, not Roderick himself, but Roderick's fears that Poe introduced the narrator into his story.

sciousness of approaching extinction. And it is this fear that makes him see, in the figure immobilized by catalepsy, his sister dead—whom he then buries with hysterical haste. "Is she not hurrying to upbraid me for my haste?" he says when he hears her come back from the vault; fear has made him both anticipate and precipitate her death. There is no "vagueness" in Roderick's fears; they are clear-cut and precisely outlined in the text.

The narrator is no less careful to present from the beginning the peculiar state of Roderick's nervous agitation, which varies from indecision to energetic vivacity and concentration—a change, so the author tells us, like that from lethargy to most intense excitement in the opium eater. This manic-depressive state of his will culminates in his precipitate action. Similarly, Roderick's behavior before and after that action is motivated by what we would call today his schizoid nature; with him nerves and intellect act separately, though not unconnectedly. The crucial action is brought about by his intellect; but after he has buried Madeline alive he will be only a victim of his nerves. It is, however, his nerves that have from the beginning influenced his intellect. Suffering as he does from a "morbid acuteness of the senses" (why do our critics omit the important motto from Béranger: "Son cœur est un luth suspendu; Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne"?), from a nervousness that does not tolerate accumulation of sensuous detail, he is necessarily driven (especially in his artistic productions) toward "pure abstractions," "distempered ideality," "nakedness of . . . design." And, since death represents the ultimate of abstraction, the zero degree of concrete reality, we are not astonished by the character of the picture he shows the narrator, a picture designed by an abstractionist *avant la lettre*, in which anticipation of death and nakedness of design converge—it shows the interior of an immensely long subterranean vault, without outlet, bathed in ghastly light. This is obviously the intellectual pattern that will materialize later in the burial of his sister in that donjon-keep which is "without means of admission for light" (until the moment when it will be invaded by the torches of the two men) and is situated "at great depth" and reached through a long, coppered archway.

The abstract pattern as it offered itself to the erratic mind of the amateur artist is acted out in reality by Roderick in a sudden move of concentrated energy.[5] But after the terrible deed has been accomplished,

[5] In the whole description of the mansion there is a pattern of "black-white" color arrangement (black, oaken, or ebony floors, dark draperies vs. the white enshrouded figure of lady Madeline which detaches itself from the somber background), and this contrast itself is in contrast with the gay, warm colors that once had made splendid our mansion: "in the greenest of our valleys"—"banners yellow, glorious, golden"—"all with pearl and ruby glowing." Black and white,

the morbidly acute nerves and senses take exclusive possession of the schizoid, polarized of course around the idea of death. When the storm rises, the portent of the fall of the mansion, it is his visual sense[6] that is stimulated: "there was a mad hilarity in his *eyes*"; he looks out toward the cloud formation which presages death. "And you have not *seen* it?" he asks the narrator who answers: "You must not—you shall not *behold* this!"—"this" being "a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion"—obviously an adumbration of the "enshrouded" figure of Madeline which we are to see later and the signal to us that the House of Usher is giving up its soul. Later it is the auditory sense that predominates in Roderick; he is now able to detect every slightest sound accompanying Madeline's revival ("Said I not that my senses were acute?")—an event which occurs at the very moment the narrator is reading the Ethelred romance, so that the reading is accompanied by the sounds of Madeline's escape from the tomb which seem strangely to harmonize with the events of the romance. While Roderick hears only the sounds in the Ethelred romance that correspond to those caused by Madeline, these sounds themselves have another meaning in the story of Madeline. They spell her victory over the dragon of death, whereas Roderick is the embodiment of pure passive sentience; it is as if by the intensity of his feeling he had succeeded in conjuring up her presence and thus broken the spell of death, though in reality it is Madeline who has wrought her own liberation (it is she who has slain the dragon, whose fangs recede from its prey). A gust of wind opens the doors to disclose her majestic figure (note in the description of this scene the "as if"):

> As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency of a spell, the huge antique panels... drew slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the rushing gust—but when with-

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the shades used more in drawing than in painting, are obviously related to the "abstractionism" of the protagonist—and perhaps to Poe's imagination itself, which was excellently characterized by a French critic in 1856 (quoted by Lemonnier, *Edgar Poe et la critique française*, 1928, p. 285) in terms of the *décor* we find in our story; Poe's imagination hovers "dans des régions vagues, où luttent sans cesse le rayon et l'obscurité. Un pas de plus vers la lumière et vous aurez le génie; vers les ténèbres et vous aurez la folie. Entre deux, c'est... un je ne sais quoi semblable à ces lampes que l'on porte avec soi dans les souterrains et les mines, et dont la lueur tremblotante dessine sur les parois de capricieuses arabesques." Since Poe delights in describing the penumbra of the human mind in which light and darkness are capriciously mixed, we may perhaps assume that the pattern "black-white" prevailing in his *décors* is given by a more basic intellectual pattern.

[6] We notice that the "luminousness" of Roderick's eyes disappears after his horrible deed has been achieved, at the time, that is, when he is reduced to pure sentience (without power of ratiocination).

out the doors there *did* stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher.

We have already noted that at the end the house gives up its soul before its actual "fall"—as though it were a human being. Our commentators point out the continuous correspondences in the descriptions, of Roderick and of the mansion:

> The house itself gets a peculiar *atmosphere* . . . from its ability apparently to defy reality: to remain intact and yet to seem completely decayed in every detail. By the same token, Roderick has a wild vitality . . . which itself springs from the fact that he is sick unto death. Indeed, Roderick Usher is more than once in the story compared to the house, and by more subtle hints, by implications of descriptive detail, throughout the story, *the house is identified with its heir and owner.* [Italics mine.] For example, the house is twice described as having "vacant eye-like windows"—the house, it is suggested, is like a man. Or, again, the mad song, which Roderick Usher sings with evident reference to himself, describes a man under the *allegory* . . . of a house.

Such parallelisms[7] belong to the inner texture of the story. On the one hand, Roderick himself explains to the narrator the fact that

> He was enchained by certain superstitious impressions in regard to the dwelling which he tenanted, and whence, for many years, he had never ventured forth . . . an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion had, by dint of long sufferance . . . obtained over his spirit—an effect which the physique of the gray walls and turrets, and of the dim tarn into which they all looked down, had, at length, brought upon the *morale* of his existence.

On the other hand, he expresses his belief in the "sentience," not only of all vegetable things, but also of "the gray stones of the home of his forefathers" (as well as of the fungi which covered them and of the decayed trees which stood around), and he sees evidence of this sentience in the influence they have had on the destinies of his family and himself. In Roderick Usher's world the differences between the human (animal), vegetable, and the mineral kingdoms are abolished. Plants and stones are sentient, human beings have a plant or animal quality (the influence of plant life on him seems to be reflected by his silken hair—"as, in its wild gossamer texture, it floated rather than fell about the face, I could not . . . connect its arabesque expression with any idea of simple humanity"), and Madeline's youthful body is buried by her brother among the stones of the vault. Life and tomb, death and fall, are one in that strange world. Obviously one cannot ask of Roder-

[7] One could add here the similar parallelism between, on the one hand, the description of the house as reminiscent of "the after-dream of the reveller upon opium" and of the vapor reeking up from the tarn as "leaden-hued" and, on the other, the characterization of Roderick's way of speaking as "that . . . hollow-sounding enunciation—that *leaden,* self-balanced, and perfectly modulated guttural utterance, which may be observed in . . . the irreclaimable *eater of opium,* during the periods of his most intense excitement."

ick any struggle against his *ambiente* or any choice of another, since he is part and parcel of this *ambiente*; since he *is* himself plant and stone (and, thinking only of stone and tomb, must bury his sister alive). It is precisely the doom of Roderick—this man with the receding chin "speaking . . . of a want of moral energy"—that he has been "eaten up by his *ambiente*" (an expression of Dostoevsky's: *sreda zaela ego*). He may crave momentarily for liberation (as is suggested by his symbolic gesture of opening the window to the storm and his "mad hilarity" at the approach of death); but none the less he knows that his life is sealed within the mansion and the attraction of the subterranean vault proves irresistible. Indeed, his proclivity for the subterranean seems to be shared by the house itself, which in the end will be buried underground (and which at the beginning had appeared reflected in the tarn as if doomed to fall therein).

The result of the interpenetration between the *ambiente* and the inhabitants of the house ("the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people") is what Poe calls "atmosphere" and describes in atmospheric terms. For us the term "atmosphere" in its metaphoric meaning is trivial, but from Poe's words we gather that he wishes the term to be understood not only metaphorically but in its proper physical sense[8] as well:

> I had so worked upon my imagination [says the narrator] as *really* to believe that about the whole mansion and domain there *hung an atmosphere* peculiar to themselves and their immediate vicinity: an atmosphere which had no affinity with the air of heaven, but which had reeked up from the decayed trees, and the gray wall, and the silent tarn; a *pestilent and mystic vapor*, dull, sluggish, *faintly discernible*, and leaden-hued. [Italics mine.]

In Roderick's room the narrator feels that he "*breathed an atmosphere* of sorrow. An *air* of stern, deep, and irredeemable gloom *hung* over and pervaded all." Roderick himself speaks of "the gradual yet certain *condensation* of an atmosphere of their own about the waters and the walls"

[8] The dictionaries inform us that this term, coined in the Neo-Latin of seventeenth-century physicists and applied to "the ring or orb of vapour or 'vaporous air' supposed to be exhaled from the body of a planet, and so to be a part of it, which the *air* itself was not considered to be," then extended to the portion of air supposed to be in the planet's sphere of influence, then to "the aeriform environment of the earth," was also used in the eighteenth century for the sphere within which the attractive force of the magnet or the electrifying force acts (what Faraday later called the "field"). The metaphorical sense, "surrounding mental or moral element, environment," is first attested in English in 1797-1803 ("an extensive atmosphere of consciousness"; cf. Scott, 1828: "He lives in a perfect atmosphere of strife, blood and quarrels"), and in German even earlier (1767 with Herder, "die Atmosphäre der Katheder"; cf. Schiller, 1797: [rhythm is] "die Atmosphäre für die poetische Schöpfung"). The German term *Dunstkreis*, which is the translation of "atmosphere," is used by Goethe in *Faust* I in the scene in which Mephistopheles leaves Faust in Gretchen's room "to satiate himself with its [sensuous] atmosphere" ("Indessen könnt ihr ganz allein / An aller Hoffnung künft' ger Freuden / In ihrem Dunstkreis satt euch weiden").

which have made him what he is. Conversely "*darkness,* as if an inherent positive quality, *poured forth* [from Roderick's mind] upon all objects of the moral and physical universe, in one unceasing *radiation of gloom.*" The atmosphere, emanating from the totality of the objects and of the human being surrounded by them, is perceptible in terms of light and darkness; and this atmosphere of "radiation of gloom" is what I have called the "soul" of the mansion, which gives itself up at the end in the form of "a faintly luminous and distinctly visible gaseous exhalation which hung about and enshrouded the mansion." We should also remember "the blood-red moon" shining through the zigzag rift of the house, the light over Roderick's picture of the subterranean vault, the luminous quality of his eyes in the midst of the death pallor of his face, etc. Thus "atmosphere" is with Poe a sensuously (optically[9]) perceptible manifestation of the sum total of the physical, mental, and moral features of a particular environment and of the interaction of these features.

It is my conviction that we cannot understand the achievement of Poe unless we place his concept of "atmosphere" within the framework of ideas concerning *milieu* and *ambiance* which were being formulated at his time. As I have shown in *Essays in Historical Semantics* (New York, 1948), the terms (*circumambient*) *air, ambient medium, milieu* (*ambiant*), *ambiance, ambiente, environment,* etc., are all reflections of an ultimately Greek concept, τό περιέχον, which represented either the air, or space, or the World Spirit in which a particular object or being was contained; and that precisely in the third decade of the nineteenth century, in consequence of the biological research of Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire on the action of the environment, the term *milieu* (*ambiant*) was applied to sociology by Comte and to fiction by Balzac, who liked to be considered a sociologist. The theory of the time was that the organic being must be explained by the environment just as the environment bears the imprint of this being. Balzac, who in 1842, in the preface to his *Comédie humaine,* used the term *milieu* in the sense in which Taine later developed it, wrote in *Le Père Goriot* (begun in 1834) his description of the owner of the Pension Vauquer:

... La face vieillotte ... ses petites mains potelées, sa personne dodue comme un rat d'église ... *sont en harmonie* avec cette salle où suinte le malheur, où s'est blottie la spéculation, et dont Mme Vauquer respire l'air chaudement fétide sans

[9] It may be remarked that, in the attestations given by Schulz-Baseler for German *Atmosphäre,* it is rather the olfactory element that is stressed. The citations offered by the *NED* show already such a conventional use of our term that it is difficult to tell what was the original sensuous emphasis; the *NED* is not as explicit in this respect as one would wish it to be. Unless evidence to the contrary is discovered, I would surmise that Poe's concentration on the *visible* aspect of "atmosphere" is his peculiar contribution.

en être écœurée... toute sa personne *explique* la pension, comme la pension *implique* sa personne... l'embonpoint blafard de cette petite femme est *le produit de cette vie*, comme le typhus est la conséquence des exhalaisons d'un hôpital. Son jupon de laine tricotée... *résume* le salon, la salle à manger, le jardinet, *annonce* la cuisine et *fait pressentir les pensionnaires*. [Italics mine.]

The last sentence prepares us for the boarder who is to be the protagonist of the story, old Goriot, who is to be thought of as potentially present, with all his lack of dignity and his frustration, in the slovenly petticoat of Madame Vauquer. With nineteenth-century determinism, mankind has developed far from the harmoniousness of Greek thought as expressed in the idea of *τό περιέχον*; man is now embedded in a milieu which may enclose him protectively like a shell, but may also represent his doom and weigh him down with its unshakable reality.

Placed against this background, "The Fall of the House of Usher" will appear to us as a poetic expression of sociological-deterministic ideas which were in the air in 1839, the date when Poe wrote this story. Indeed at one point Poe has Roderick summarize current environmental theory: ". . . an influence which some peculiarities in the mere form and substance of his family mansion had, by dint of long sufferance, he said, obtained over his spirit—an effect which the *physique* of the gray walls . . . had, at length, brought about upon the *morale* of his existence." From this scientific theory Poe distills the poetic effect—just as he does when exploiting, for artistic purposes, contemporary theories of hypnotism, phrenology, and "the sentience of things." Our story is determinism made poetic, "atmospheric."[10] To ask Roderick to "resist" his environment when his character is meant to be the poetic embodiment of determinism is not consonant with the historical understanding of the climate of the story written in 1839—the story reflects what has been correctly called "le réalisme des romantiques."

It is, of course, not by chance that Poe insists on "atmosphere" in his story; he is describing an environment, not realistically as did Balzac, but "atmospherically".[11] We are not offered a description of the petti-

[10] In the theoretical appendix to *Understanding Fiction* our critics take up the term "atmosphere" to tell us, on the one hand, that "The Fall of the House of Usher" is an "atmosphere story" (as opposed to a plot, a character, a theme story), a story, that is, containing a considerable element of description, especially description intended to evoke a certain mood; on the other, that every story (not only Poe's "atmosphere story") possesses a certain atmosphere, which is the product of "the nature of the plot, of setting, of character delineation, of style and symbolism, of the very rhythms of the prose." But there is also the "atmosphere of an environment," exemplified in the description of the House of Usher (which description indeed produces a certain "mood") and defined by Poe in terms of the environmentalism of his time ("the perfect keeping of the character of the premises with the accredited character of the people").

[11] Professor Auerbach, commenting in his book *Mimesis* (p. 406) on the passage in *Le Père Goriot* discussed above, speaks of its "atmospheric realism" (that is, the realism with which the general *ambiente* of the Pension Vauquer is evoked). I have been using the term "atmospheric" somewhat differently as meaning "*only* atmospheric" description, description rendering only the atmosphere.

coat of the lady Madeline nor of the thousand other details of the sort that serve to substantiate the heavy, oppressive, petty-bourgeois atmosphere of the Pension Vauquer, but only those details which are strictly connected with the main motif—the gossamer-like hair of Roderick, the blush on the cheek of the cataleptic Madeline, the vault and the archway, etc. It is as though the author, himself akin to his Roderick, had elaborated his story in terms of "abstract design" served by "acuity of senses";[12] in fashioning the environment of his story he has proceeded deductively,[13] starting from the concept of mad fear and giv-

[12] This is exactly what endeared him to Baudelaire: see Professor Peyre's *Connaissance de Baudelaire* (Paris, 1951), p. 111: "les deux hommes avaient en partage un curieux mélange de traits émotifs et de traits intellectuels, une sensualité capable de s'élancer vers les régions supérieures à l'air raréfié, et une puissance d'analyste et de logicien abstrait rare chez les poètes."

[13] This statement was corroborated by Poe himself (in 1842); see Fagin, *The Histrionic Mr. Poe*, p. 163: "A skilful literary artist has constructed a tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single *effect* to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect." I do not agree with the opinion expressed in Malcolm Cowley's otherwise excellent article (in *New Republic*, Nov. 5, 1945) that the idea of Poe just quoted should be paralleled with the American absorption with mechanical devices, as illustrated by the engineering achievements of his time; for we find the same emphasis on literary technique for the purpose of attaining a specific effect in the ancients, in Goethe, in Valéry. And it would seem paradoxical to condemn Poe (the archenemy of industrial progress), on the basis of the ambiguity contained in the word "technique," for his "engineering talent in poetry and fiction." A semantic fallacy is involved also in Professor Fagin's conception of the "histrionic" element in Poe. Fagin makes the passage quoted above, with its emphasis on skillfully contrived novelistic plots, on "effect," serve the quite gratuitous theory that Poe's genius is to be "explained" by a histrionic, effect-seeking talent which was not allowed to come to fruition on the stage proper in a man who wished to remain a "Mr. Poe": Poe has "somehow ... missed his true vocation and destiny" (p. 2). Since fiction tends in general toward drama (as Henry James has taught us) and since the short story is the most dramatically concentrated form of fiction, it is not difficult for Mr. Fagin to represent the writing of a story in terms of an analogy with the production of a play, and to single out in Poe's stories the theatrical character of his plots, settings, lighting effects (even "area-lighting"), stage props ("Max Reinhardtish at its lushest—and worst"), sound effects (in "The Fall of the House of Usher": "Melodrama? Grand Guignol stuff? Perhaps. But ... how superbly staged!"), synchronization, dénouements (similar to those of the Greek tragedy), character delineation, and the rest ("his stories are frequently dramatic productions in which Poe displays his craftsmanship as bard, playwright, stage-designer, electrician, actor, elocutionist and above all, director"—p. 207). Apart from the fact that Mr. Fagin must confess that Poe as a playwright (in his *Politian*) was a total failure, and apart from the more general experience that any explanation of effect by defect, of genius by frustration, is a psychological error, the main fallacy in such reasoning is that, through the use of the metaphorical *word* "histrionic," the fundamental difference between the art of writing a dramatic story and the art of the stage is blurred. With the same reasoning the author of the *Commedia* could be represented as a frustrated producer. To take only the lighting effects (and God knows that Dante was a past master in

ing it sensuous detail only insofar as the senses are stimulated by this madness. And we may suspect that Poe indulged in the description of the monomania of fear precisely because this offered him patterns entirely intellectual, leading away from actual life and superimposing upon it another reality—that of madness. It is a remarkable feature of his romantic realism that Poe can accept environmentalism when it borders on irreality, whereas in Balzac the irreality of his monomaniacs grows out of earthy realism. With Balzac we see the solid ground on which the pyramid of his novels rests, with Poe only the peak of the pyramid which is bathed in the rarefied atmosphere of ratiocination. Our critics are wrong in reading Poe only "emotionally," not "conceptually."

If we compare both Balzac and Kafka with Poe, we find that the first two, while having an environmental realism in common which distinguishes their technique from Poe's atmospheric description, differ totally from each other in that Balzac's is an empirical (inductive) realism while Kafka's is a deductive realism (there is a deductive element also in Poe). Thus, environmentalism is portrayed (1) with empirical (factual) realism by Balzac, (2) with deductive realism by Kafka ("as-if realism"), and (3) with deductive irrealism by Poe ("only atmospheric" realism).

If our critics fail to appreciate "The Fall of the House of Usher" while admiring Kafka's story "In the Penal Colony" (and probably Balzac's *Le Père Goriot*), the reason may be that with Poe's atmospheric environmentalism (which is realistic only insofar as he makes the atmosphere real) the details of the description are inspired, not by realistic observation of actual contemporary mansions, but by reminiscences of conventional *literary* patterns outmoded at his time (the haunted castle of Mrs. Radcliffe, etc.). It is surely not in his choice of such hackneyed stage props that Poe's inventiveness lies, but in the arrangement to which he subjects them in order to form patterns of intellectual design.

As for Kafka, though his story, "In the Penal Colony," is based on a deductive procedure similar to Poe's, he has chosen for the description of his entirely imaginative, even allegorical, environment what I would call an "as-if realism"; he offers such factual details of modern life that the reader, at least at the beginning of the story, believes himself to be in a realistic milieu. We seem to find ourselves with the French Foreign Legion on some remote island; and the description, by the enthusiastic officer, of the summary methods of jurisdiction practiced in the colony or of the executions by means of an elaborately devised machine pro-

those!), Fagin overlooks the essential difference between lighting effects *suggested by words* to the imagination of the reader and the material light actually released on a stage before our eyes.

duces at first an impression of factual accuracy (written in 1919, the story seems to anticipate Hitlerism). Only in the further course of the story do we realize the fantastic character of that jurisdiction and of that gruesome engine, both of which are contrived (deductively!) by the author only in order to symbolize the inevitable, if ununderstandable, cruelty of any civilization.[14]

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[14] The reader might find it more natural to compare the treatment of the castle motif in Poe and Kafka. And, indeed, the castle is in both somehow the embodiment of existential fear. With Poe, however, we see the castle (the mansion) dying of "its" fears, we are with him within the castle. In Kafka's *The Castle*, we are outside the castle, which seems very much alive, although the laws according to which it functions remain unknown to the protagonist, whose existential fear is motivated by his inability ever to find his place there (a symbol of the bewilderment of modern man faced with an institutionalized world which he cannot understand, but only fear.)

BOOK REVIEWS

THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC POETS. A REVIEW OF RESEARCH. Edited by Thomas M. Raysor. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1950. 241 p.

In a handy volume of 241 pages, with a one-page preface and no index, the present work offers solid testimony to the industry, devotion, and learning of six eminent scholars, Ernest Bernbaum, Thomas M. Raysor, René Wellek, Samuel C. Chew, Bennett Weaver, and Clarence D. Thorpe, who have pooled their energies for the benefit of all fellow workers in the field of romantic literature. The year 1950 was a fitting time for the publication of this survey of research in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and the romantic movement as a whole. Scholars of all ages and experience will find it useful, and younger scholars in particular, those who are just beginning to "keep watch o'er man's mortality," will turn frequently to the book. Conductors of seminars and supervisors of dissertations can now devote less time to the assembling of bibliographies and more to training students in respect for evidence and validity of critical approach.

The opening chapter of the book is devoted to the romantic movement as a whole; here Bernbaum provides compressed lists of the major efforts to define preromanticism and to define and evaluate romanticism. Works on the preromantic movement are grouped according to such categories as the moral value of sympathy and benevolence, the treatment of nature, the school of sensibility, religion, the French Revolution, primitivism, the Gothic novel, literary theories, the relation of English to foreign literature, interrelations between literature and the fine arts. The treatment of the romantic movement is broken into three large divisions: the history of the movement in England, the history in continental literature, and the nature and value of romantic literature. The third division is of course the fullest and the most controversial, for it includes not only the varied and unending attempts to isolate and define the essence of romanticism, but the attacks by the New Humanism and by the New Criticism, defenses by "appreciative enthusiasts," and other judgments not so easily classifiable.

Though the tone of the section on preromanticism is objective, the point of view of its author is not disguised. The search for sources and influences, he says in a vigorous paragraph, doubtless with an eye to budding graduate students, is likely to lead to fruitless grubbing after questionable roots and consequent neglect of the flower—"a laborious pursuit in underground darkness." Related to this delving for *Quellen* is the failure to discriminate between the valuable and the worthless; the Gothic novels were "sensational and... trashy best sellers," but research upon them has been more voluminous than upon "such really meritorious literature" as the writings of Collins, Gray, Cowper, and Sterne. The study of preromanticism is mainly valuable for the light that it throws on the great romantic figures; works of scholarship should be judged adversely if the authors do not "know and appreciate the nature of Romanticism as a whole, and as manifested in the characteristic masterpieces..."

The section on the romantic movement lists works of general and historical scope, works on foreign influences, on relations between literature and the fine arts (with reference to discussions of "baroque," "rococo," and "romantic"), on the

history of aesthetics, on religious and supernatural matters, on political attitudes and ideals, on the novel and essay and drama as types, and on such other topics as the influence of Milton, poetic vocabularies, and treatment of landscape. Half of the paragraph on political attitudes is devoted to a demolition of J. Barzun's "journalistic" book, especially its thesis that Fascism and Nazism are outcomes of romanticism.

The section on "The Nature and Value of Romanticism" begins with the admission that no single definition can sum up the complex, comprehensive, and varying essence of romanticism, reviews quickly the best-known definitions and works on the subject, including Lovejoy's discrimination of romanticisms. Lovejoy's method is strongly disapproved of in a page of argument (the fullest space yet given to a single author); his "logical positivism and nominalism," it is held, are "utterly unfit for literary interpretation."

As for the value of romantic literature, there has been more ardor than balance, and the ardor tends to run to extremes of praise or condemnation, making the whole controversy rather confusing. The two organized attacks on romanticism, by the New Humanism and the New Criticism, are here reviewed, and ample references furnished to their arguments and to the replies that they stimulated. It is admitted that the New Critics are in general better critics than the New Humanists because they keep literary considerations in mind, but their hostility to romantic literature is positive and unceasing. "They speak for a generation which is world-weary, materialistic, and skeptical," and to this, it is implied, is owed their distortion of the idealism and authenticity of romantic literature.

The second chapter of the book is devoted to Wordsworth. With the same exemplary brevity and fair-mindedness as in the first chapter, Bernbaum lists and characterizes the bibliographical guides (J. V. Logan requires supplementing from Havens, Cooper, et al.), the editions, the biographical works, and the criticism. It may surprise non-Wordsworthians to learn that De Selincourt's often-praised edition of the letters is "not perfect or complete," that in details the earlier editions by Knight "are sometimes more full and accurate." Other editions of the letters (by Broughton, Morley, etc.) supplement the volumes edited by De Selincourt, and there are some five separate indexes to be consulted. The principal biographical works are rapidly assessed and their bent indicated; only one of them, by George W. Meyer, draws forth an extended argument. The treatment is severe and sharp but without innuendo; the two pages of rebuttal disapprove of Meyer's "lawyer-like procedure," charge him with a lack of imaginative sympathy, and object particularly to his view of *The Prelude* as self-deceptive idealization and to the thesis that Wordsworth's political views grew out of his mistreatment in money matters. The skirmish over, other biographical studies of William and Dorothy are surveyed, and then the perplexing problem of Wordsworth's decline is summed up, perhaps with too much compression, in a single paragraph. No longer, we learn, can it be argued that the death of Wordsworth's brother was a primary cause of this decline or turning point, for it is now known that the crucial "Ode to Duty" was composed several months before the death of the brother.

A section follows on Wordsworth's philosophical, religious, and political ideas. His religious ideas have been traced to many sources, Platonic, Christian, Stoic; they should not be subjected to such rigidly sectarian assessment as is found, for example, in the Anglo-Catholic approach of H. N. Fairchild. Nor should Wordsworth's pantheism, "which is certainly orthodox," be confused with the heresy of pantheism with which he is frequently charged. As to Wordsworth's conception of nature, scholarship has passed through three stages since 1900: misrepresentation (by the New Humanists), dismissal as a sentimental illusion, and recognition as a

tenable faith. Possibly Bernbaum finds this "tenable faith" more widely recognized than it actually is, but he cites Stallknecht, Raven, and others in support.

Now comes a survey of critical opinion, on such topics as the influence of the ballad, the pastoral, German literature, Milton. Wordsworth's style is discussed, and his theories of poetry. Bernbaum feels that there has been a disproportionate emphasis on poetic diction, whereas Wordsworth's ideas are the chief reason for studying him. Havens' book is praised for its thoroughness and "judicious attitude," but it is "regrettably unsympathetic to Wordsworth's faith in nature" and inconsistent on Wordsworth's "concept of imagination." This view of Havens' book, like the estimates of Beatty, may be taken as typical of Bernbaum's point of view—he gives fair hearing to all dissident judgments, but if the ethical and transcendental elements of Wordsworth's poetry are denied or slighted, truth has been evaded or distorted.

Some questions arise as to proportion, emphasis, and accuracy of summary. For example, only one sentence is given to Legouis' book on *The Prelude*, while two pages go to the combat with Meyer. Basil Willey's essay on Wordsworth's view of nature is falsified by attributing Hulme's "spilt religion" to Willey and by calling Willey's attitude "disdainful" (p. 51). Stallknecht's championship of Wordsworth's nature religion is welcomed warmly; he has given "the finishing stroke" to the detractors, and shown that in Wordsworth's best work "there is nothing shallow, illogical, or intellectually contemptible" (p. 53). This may be to claim too much, and the eager stationing of Stallknecht in the breach is itself somewhat undermined by the subsequent disagreement with Stallknecht's views on the "Ode to Duty." There is no reference here to the cancelled stanza which Stallknecht prints. Not all students will accept a later statement that Wordsworth's primary aim, especially as explained in the Prefaces, was to "arouse the sensual, vacant, and vain" to magnanimity (p. 52). And there will certainly be varying reactions to the acceptance of G. W. Knight as a bulwark of romanticism. His weaknesses are not denied, but he is welcomed mainly for his "tranquil awareness of the presence in temporal life of eternity" (p. 63). A slip of the pen must have been responsible for the reference to the "1806-07" text of *The Prelude* on p. 60.

Coleridge enlists the services of two scholars, T. M. Raysor and René Wellek. Mr. Raysor undertakes the poetry, and, in thoroughly dispassionate and tolerant fashion, gives equal hearing to all points of view. There is need, he says, for a full-scale biography of Coleridge, one that will deal solidly with his poetry and philosophy and not merely with the external facts of his life. The present biographies tend by their economy to emphasize the frustration and ruin of Coleridge's life, failing to show us the man that Wordsworth called "the most wonderful man I ever knew." The letters which Mr. Griggs is editing will furnish biographical details and illustrate Coleridge's phychological introspection, but they will not challenge the letters of Keats or Byron in literary value. The notebooks are being edited by Miss Coburn in their entirety.

Coleridge's evolving styles in poetry have been discriminated in an article comparing the several versions of the "Monody on the Death of Chatterton," and it can now be argued that both in style (the conversational medium) and in idea "The Aeolian Harp" was the seed that flowered in "Tintern Abbey." The first draft of this poem was written before Coleridge knew Wordsworth; it is the first of Coleridge's poems in which his diction is pure and his verse-music is fluent, and it anticipates Wordsworth in discovering a spiritual presence in nature. Many readers will be surprised to learn that "Lewti" was in its original version a poem by Wordsworth. E. H. Coleridge gives several variants of "Lewti" in his edition of the poems, but it was not until 1941 that De Selincourt quietly incorporated "Beauty

and Moonlight," the first text of the poem, in Vol. I of *The Poetical Works* of Wordsworth. Coleridge's first draft (formerly dated 1794) of this several-times rewritten and markedly transmuted poem belongs almost certainly to the year of his close intimacy with Wordsworth, 1797.

Among general works of criticism *The Road to Xanadu* still holds its eminence, but Lowes's attitude to the "moral" of "The Ancient Mariner" has been increasingly questioned. The present reviewer can understand this effort to make the poem fit into Coleridge's known bent for theology and ethics, but the poet's celebrated answer to Mrs. Barbauld and Lowes's elaboration upon this appear to be not only the final word on this poem, but a reminder that the poet who planned the *Lyrical Ballads* with Wordsworth took as his assignment the simple aesthetic task of making supernatural events credible.

Mr. Raysor, almost alone among the authors of this book, appears to fear nothing from the onslaughts of the New Critics or of psychoanalytic and symbolist interpretations; he is friendly to new approaches. While indicating the limitations of such writers as Maud Bodkin, G. W. Knight, and Kenneth Burke, he adds: "One must give a fair hearing to authors of such abilities and recognize the prestige of psychoanalysis in the contemporary world." And thus he finds R. P. Warren's essay on "The Ancient Mariner," though strained in its symbolism, not deserving of the harsh judgment meted out by E. E. Stoll. On the subject of opium, Raysor finds Abrams's arguments convincing; certain parts of "The Ancient Mariner" were probably derived from Coleridge's dreams or reveries. But then two pages are granted to Elizabeth Schneider's article on "Kubla Khan," in which she argues *against* the usual assumption that the poem was a product of, whether or not it was composed during, an opium reverie. Raysor appears not to be perfectly convinced but finds the evidence so strong that he predicts the "heresy" will be generally accepted.

The treatment of "Christabel" is mainly prosodical; authorities are cited to confirm the revolutionary metrics and to correct Saintsbury and Schipper. All this is to the good, but one wonders whether the conclusion is justified: "No other approach to this poem can do as much for an imaginative appreciation of its greatness as a musical analysis" (p. 90). What would the poem be like without its fable and its atmosphere? As to "Dejection," Stallknecht is preferred to Lovejoy, who insists that the poem is emotional and has no basis in transcendental epistemology. Coming to the "Hymn Before Sunrise," and the question of plagiarism in the poem, Raysor takes a tolerant attitude; the student is referred to discussions of the subject, and the generalization is offered that Coleridge did not willfully seek to deceive, that editors have, for example, printed poems from his notebooks which Coleridge did not intend to pass off as his own, that the detection by scholars of translations and "borrowings" should not be regarded as a verdict of guilty but simply as the correction of "perfectly natural mistakes of Coleridge's editors." It will be seen that Wellek takes a somewhat stricter view of the plagiarisms in Coleridge's prose.

Coleridge the philosopher and Coleridge the critic fall to the lot of René Wellek, and must be briefly treated here. Most studies of Coleridge's thought have been concerned with the German influence, and there are no competent studies of his relation to Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Bacon, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Berkeley; neither is there any adequate account of his influence and reputation. When one reads the requirements set down by Wellek (p. 101) for a just assessment of Coleridge's relationship to German thought alone, there seems not much hope that any single scholar will succeed in writing the history of Coleridge's mind. A mind as wide-ranging as Coleridge's would be required, and habits more systematic. Of one thing

Wellek is convinced, that both Coleridge's philosophy and his critical theories are patently derivative; therefore his thought "cannot claim a high position in the history of philosophy," and in criticism he should be regarded as a transmitter of ideas from Germany rather than as an originator. The concept of organic unity, for example, is found in Goethe, the Schlegels, and Schelling, and the reconcilement of opposites is an outgrowth of this concept rather than the other way around. Contrary to Raysor and some others, Wellek regards Coleridge's critical theory and practice as interdependent, and appears to imply that, if the theory is derivative, the practice loses a good deal of its value. But on the subject of value he does not really declare himself. No effort is made to judge the aesthetic or psychological worth of Coleridge's observations on Shakespeare, Milton, or his own contemporaries.

Byron's poetic worth is perhaps less hotly debated today than Coleridge's critical theory or Shelley's ideals and personality. It may be partly for this reason that Chew's synopses of research are models of economy, balance, and tact, yet manage always to be specific; but it is also true that Mr. Chew has a knack in this most difficult art. He can praise or blame without ever seeming to argue, as shown in his treatment of the widely varying biographies by Mayne, Drinkwater, Quennell, Richter, Maurois, and Nicolson. It is notable, as he points out, that none of these biographies is by an American scholar, in contrast to massive biographies of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats by Americans. Leslie Marchand is, however, presently at work on a new biography. Critical interest in Byron has lagged behind the biographical during the last forty years, but there is ample material nevertheless on such topics as Byron's religious ideas, his critical opinions, his reading, his *Heldentypus,* his dreams, his Gothic strain, his Augustan temper, and his social satire. W. J. Calvert's *Byron: Romantic Paradox* is reviewed at some length, and would seem to express fairly well Chew's own attitude. Yet it is not to a book but to an essay that he gives his highest praise; Oliver Elton's chapter on Byron in his *Survey* is "of all the critiques on Byron produced in the twentieth century . . . on the whole the most satisfactory."

If the personality of Byron has overshadowed the interest in his poetry, the personality of Shelley has not so much overshadowed as interfered with critical objectivity. Again and again, as Weaver observes, critical misrepresentation of Shelley arises from confusing the poet with the husband of Harriet and Mary. In spite of this, and in spite of the fourteen different biographical interpretations that N. I. White thought he could trace, Jeaffreson and R. Metcalf Smith have been the only distinctly "unfriendly" biographers. We are reminded, too, that attacks on Shelley, early and late, have seldom been motivated purely by his politics; his "atheism" and "immorality" were the provoking elements. Weaver insists that Shelley had a growing mind, and calls him "one of the deepest scholars among the English poets." Though Shelley's ideas seem to be of more interest than his lyricism to Weaver, he deplores excessive attention to "sources," and gently ridicules those who reach into this poet scholar and pull out the plums they were looking for: Plato or Bacon or Dante or Christ or Stendhal, as the case may be. The section on Shelley's philosophy describes some nine books and a number of articles. The descriptions are not entirely free of ambiguity, and there is one curious example of disproportion: more space is granted to an article on the Maniac of "Julian and Maddalo" than to any one of the nine books. The chapter concludes with a rather brief account of Shelley's literary characteristics, followed by several pages on "The Cenci," "Alastor," and "Prometheus Unbound." Four pages are given to "Prometheus" and two and a half to "Alastor," doubtless with justice, though "Alastor" is said to have attracted more critical attention than any other poem of

Shelley. A footnote lists an article or two on "The Witch of Atlas," "Adonais," "Ode to the West Wind," "Epipsychidion," "To a Skylark," and so on, but nothing like a representative bibliography is offered for these poems. Evidently limitations of space required this foreshortening, which may be atoned for by the wise advice offered for future study: Shelley's life "has perhaps been sufficiently scrutinized," and what is needed is "criticism disassociated from biography, going beyond examination of sources, and, with the ability to imagine that which it knows, fixing its interest faithfully upon the page which Shelley wrote."

The biographies of Keats, Thorpe reports, usually mingle interpretation and criticism with their narrative. Colvin is a safer interpreter than Amy Lowell, though some new facts are found in her book. A good deal has been published on Keats's reputation and afterfame, but there is more to do. Current valuations of Keats's poetry vary considerably, but not infrequently he is placed near or beside Shakespeare. He has been called the greatest poet since the seventeenth century, and G. W. Knight believes he might have outdistanced both Shakespeare and Milton had he lived and gone on developing. Even T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis have praise to give. Saintsbury, Grierson, Bush, and others find Keats unquestionably the principal influence exerted on nineteenth-century poetry, and Saintsbury is incisive: "Keats begat Tennyson and Tennyson begat all the rest."

The older view of Keats as a poet of the senses has now been modified by many studies, especially during the 1920s and 1930s, which trace Keats's growth as a thinker. There are still a few writers, however, like Garrod, Fairchild, and G. R. Elliott, who hold either that Keats's "craving for thought . . . spoiled his singing" or that his poetry has few values outside the sensuous. Without denying the reflective strain in Keats, this reviewer would offer the reminder that "Hyperion," for example, is not less sensuous than "The Eve of St. Agnes" or "Endymion"; a mistake often made is to assume that Keats was growing more "spiritual" as he was growing less sensuous. The truth is that he was doing more thinking and less dreaming, he was coming to wisdom through suffering; and so increasingly he dwelt on the tragedy of life, scolding himself for toying with the nereids' hair and floating off into amorous elysiums. There was no diminution of sensuous quality in his poetry, however, as witness "Lamia," "Ode on Melancholy," "To Autumn," "The Fall of Hyperion."

Thorpe's summary of his own book judiciously balances the various arguments about Keats's growth; Keats did not, he concludes, attain to any final reconciliation of the discordant forces within him, but he was steadily approaching such a reconciliation through thought, discipline, and hard work. With so sober a conclusion, no one would wish to disagree, but it may be wondered whether these words give a sufficient hint of the thesis put forward in at least one chapter of Thorpe's book, to the effect that "Keats was a philosophical idealist to whom divine and eternal laws became apparent through visible and present phenomena . . ."

An excellent survey is provided of such topics as Keats's diction, the influences of Spenser and Milton, the sources of his ideas, phrases, and forms of verse, his indebtedness to previous and contemporary poets, his prosody, his imagery, his treatment of the ode, sonnet, and couplet, his relationship to Greece and Rome and to the fine arts, especially sculpture, his steady improvement in craftsmanship.

A few minor alternations may be suggested for the next edition of this book. E. E. Stoll's excellent article deserves to be described rather than embedded in a footnote with miscellaneous associates (p. 241). The assertion that Keats's use of "sensation" is equivalent to "intuition" (p. 218) is an error, the proof of which was published in April 1949. It would be of advantage to bring together the two discussions of Finney's book on pp. 219-220 and pp. 231-232. Granted Finney's

mistakes and his dogmatism, he does not argue (in his book at least) that "The Fall of Hyperion" in its entirety was composed in 1818 (p. 220, the second reference), but only that Canto I, lines 1-248 were then composed. Veronika Orend-Schmidt is usually referred to with the hyphenated name rather than as Orendt merely (p. 222), and her book is deserving of better placement than in a footnote. Newell F. Ford's articles on "Endymion" may go counter to orthodox interpretations, but they do not show Ford "in vigorous opposition to all assumptions by previous critics." Ford does not argue that the poem moves "strictly on the erotic level," and above all he does not give the impression that the poet of "Endymion" was "essentially a sybarite" dreaming of a "Venusberg of sensual bliss" (p. 223). These are loaded words and the appraisal is not objective. How can it be that the "*passionate* experience" which Caldwell finds in the Apollo of "Hyperion" is "in essential agreement with Colvin, Thorpe, and others" (p. 226)? The celebrated odes were not written in "early summer, 1818" (p. 226)—a slip of the pen, surely—but in late spring, 1819. The "Ode on Melancholy" should not be called the "Ode *to* Melancholy" (pp. 215, 228). These are, to be sure, small defects, and it is remarkable that in an undertaking of such magnitude there should be so few.

Let it be hoped that graduate students will never be tempted, as they could not be with the one-sentence or one-phrase evaluations in Bernbaum's *Guide*, to read a scholar's paragraph or summary in the present book instead of examining the work in question. Bernbaum's *Guide* will not be superseded, for it offers bibliographies of sixteen writers rather than five; and if it contains a listing, that listing can be tracked down sometimes more quickly than in the present work. Limitations of space doubtless forced the compressed treatment at many points, as well as the abbreviated titles and the bracketed *supras* accorded to a second or third listing of a work; this sometimes requires the reader to turn over ten pages or more to verify a title (Stovall for example, pp. 174, 188). Occasionally, too, one looks in vain for the title and date of a significant work; Swinburne is quoted twice on Shelley (pp. 167, 179) and once on Coleridge (p. 89), but only by turning to Bernbaum's *Guide* can one be sure of the title and date of the volume containing Swinburne's essay. An index would very markedly increase the usefulness of this *Review of Research*, and in future editions and cumulations, of which there will surely be many, one may hope to see it supplied.

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LITERATURE THROUGH ART: A NEW APPROACH TO FRENCH LITERATURE. By Helmut A. Hatzfeld. New York: Oxford University Press, 1952. xiii, 247 p.

The problem of the relation of literature to the other arts is an ancient one. Writers on aesthetics have discussed the question of literature and the fine arts, of literature and music, and, particularly in modern times, have endeavored to set up systems showing the interrelations of all the arts. On the other hand, historians of art and of literature have again and again pointed out, sometimes vaguely, sometimes in detail, specific parallels between works of art and literary texts. But many problems of this comparative study, as Paul Maury indicated in his *Art et littérature comparés: Etat présent de la question* (1934), have been either neglected or treated only partially and inadequately.

Professor Hatzfeld's book, which won the MLA-Oxford Award in 1949, is an important contribution to the problem. He sets out "to elucidate French literature with the help of pictorial art." However, the reader soon discovers that the book

actually treats not only "literature through art," but also "art through literature." This is made entirely clear in the concluding chapter, and is fully justified. One only wishes that this clarification had come at an earlier stage, thus sparing the reader the uncomfortable sense of shifting focus which he feels in the first part of the book.

The great value of the work lies in its combination of the historical and the aesthetic approaches, which in the past have too often been separated, and in its detailed study of a large number of significant parallels. Professor Hatzfeld says in his preface: "The starting point in such comparative studies must always be the cultural pattern of the epoch; the goal, problems of pure form . . . we have put side by side concrete examples of French literature and art as represented by texts and pictures or sculptures from 1100 to 1940 and have drawn such parallels between them as seem reasonable. This has never been done before."

While this claim is perhaps slightly exaggerated, it is certainly true that such a synthesis for an entire literature has not been made, nor have such a large number of examples been studied in detail and correlated. Professor Hatzfeld rightly emphasizes the prime importance of detailed analysis, the fact that the historian must also be a philologist and a critic, able to make both *explications de textes* and *explications de tableaux* and to relate them to each other. It is unfortunate that often picture and text, instead of appearing on the same page or on facing pages, are separated; one realizes, however, that the setting up of such a book presents an extremely difficult problem. Although the author says that "Modern French has been translated only when it was felt necessary for the convenience of the reader," a fair number of modern texts—for example, passages from Hugo, Balzac, and Flaubert—are translated for no apparent reason. This seems regrettable, since the translations are often slightly awkward, and there are occasional slips, as when in a passage from *Le Neveu de Rameau* the sentence "Je crois qu'au fond vous avez l'âme délicate" is rendered "I am afraid, underneath it all, you have a delicate soul."

The book has seven chapters, the first six organized historically and the seventh, "Consequences for Literary Criticism," organized on aesthetic lines. The first six chapters are entitled: "The Romanesque and Gothic Epochs" (1000-1350); "The Flamboyant and Renaissance Epochs" (1350-1600); "The Baroque Classicism of the Seventeenth Century" (1600-1715); "The Rococo of the Eighteenth Century" (1715-1789); "Romanticism" (1789-1850); "Impressionism and Surrealism" (1860-1940). The terms, it may be noted, are those which are commonly used for the history of art, though not in all cases for the history of literature. Each chapter begins with a brief statement of the chief characteristics of the period in question, and is then subdivided into a number of sections, in which different types of parallels between literature and art are presented. The first chapter, for example, is divided as follows: "The Majestic-Hieratic Approach to Divine and Human Mysteries"; "Static Presentation of Fantastic Concepts"; "Emotional-Dynamic Approach to a Symbolic World"; "Physical and Psychological Observation in Monumental, Global Presentation"; "Trends in Allegory and Caricature." Here again a possible misunderstanding on the part of the reader might have been avoided. Both literary historians and art historians may well find the characterizations inadequate for their own fields; if I am not mistaken, Professor Hatzfeld does not intend them to be so for either field separately, but only for the regions where the two are related. A word of explanation would have made this clear from the start.

I should say at this point that my own competence is decidedly less in the field of the first three chapters than in that of the following three. Professor Hatzfeld's position is somewhat the reverse; his interest is particularly in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the baroque, on all of which he has done admirable work. And it

is evident from this book that that is where his sympathies and interests lie.

The chronological divisions of the first four chapters are traditional. In the case of the fifth and the sixth, I have some doubts, fortified by the curious fact that the decade 1850-60 (during which some of the greatest literary works of the nineteenth century appeared) is inexplicably left as a kind of No Man's Land between them. The isolation of romanticism and the lumping together of "impressionism" and "surrealism" seem questionable. Historians of both art and literature have tended more and more to question the old division of the nineteenth century into two neat halves, one labeled "romanticism," the other "realism," and to see a continuity in the century that is deeper than surface differences. It seems to me that Professor Hatzfeld's lack of sympathy for the literature and art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has led him into prejudice and misunderstanding. For romanticism he has only hard words: "French romanticism turns out to be a civilization of sensations for eye and ear, of surface interests, and of a fancy running wild. What should be dramatic is melodramatic; what should be shaded is violent. The aristocratic trends are frustrated by the popular and even vulgar ones" (pp. 120-121). That there is a measure of truth in this no one will deny, but it is far from being the whole truth. What I find particularly confusing is Professor Hatzfeld's definition, or rather definitions, of "impressionism." He starts off: "from a philosophic point of view any form of modern realism may be called impressionism" (p. 164); then he speaks of "impressionism in literature, coinciding to a certain extent with symbolism" (p. 169); then "impressionism means preoccupation with life, water, sun, rhythm, sometimes underscored by the subject, sometimes by the technique" (p. 177); and finally "impressionism is driven to two extremes in its tendencies: a radical *l'art pour l'art*, which is no longer interested in life but in the rhythm of life expressed by art; and a preoccupation with striking, beautiful, or surprising movements, as in dancers, running horses, or people at work" (p. 186). It is difficult to reconcile these definitions, which seem to represent a somewhat desperate effort to unify divergent tendencies in a period still so close to us that perspective is far from easy.

One wishes that Professor Hatzfeld had made more explicit the fact that his method has more scope and more validity for some periods than for others. The majority of parallels between literature and art have as their literary term texts from "creative" writing—poetry, novel, drama—forms, that is, in which the materials of artists and writer coincide, or at least overlap, with a strong visual element. The more literature deals with ideas, the less it lends itself to this method. The method is most successful for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, whose literature is admirably illuminated by such parallels, and in which the relation between art and literature has been increasingly stressed. Again, in the Middle Ages there was a close relation, though a less self-conscious one, between literature and art. But when it comes to the intervening periods the student of French literature cannot fail to be struck by the absence, or at best passing mention, in this book, of some of the greatest names and works. The name of Montaigne occurs only once, and there are only the briefest mentions of Rabelais. Descartes is referred to only in passing. There are indeed a number of parallels between texts of Pascal and works of art, but they are not among the most felicitous, as when Professer Hatzfeld says: "in the Park of Versailles the infinite is symbolized by endless perspectives of avenues, series of lanes, lawns, trees, and rows of statues, all forcing the eye to the central point far away. The visitor, overwhelmed by such an impression, is likely to realize Pascal's cosmic experience . . . 'Le silence éternel des espaces infinis m'effraie' " (p. 88). The reader can hardly fail to find the parallel strained and unconvincing. But it is in the chapter on the eighteenth century that the limitations of this approach appear most clearly. The very fact that it is entitled "The Rococo"

is significant; a minor aspect of the century, so far as literature is concerned, is the focal point of the whole chapter. While the great philosophers of the century appear in it, their full stature is lacking. This is understandable enough, and yet another indication of the limitation of the approach through art. What is more difficult to understand is the neglect of Diderot, not merely in the domain of aesthetic theory, but also in the field of concrete parallels between art and literature, where, for example, Diderot achieved the remarkable transposition into literature of Vernet's landscapes, in the *Salon de 1767*. Even in the later periods it is not difficult to find authors in whose case this approach reveals nothing of significance—Stendhal, to take one example, whose interest in painting is only faintly and occasionally reflected in his novels.

But within the limitations of his approach Professor Hatzfeld presents a wealth of illuminating and suggestive examples, which are classified in his concluding chapter under seven headings: "Details of a Literary Text Elucidated by a Picture"; "Details of a Picture Clarified by a Literary Text"; "Concepts and Motifs of Literature Clarified by the Arts of Design"; "Motifs of Pictures Elucidated through Literature"; "Literary-Linguistic Forms Made Comprehensible by Art Forms"; "Art Forms Explained by Literary-Stylistic Expressions"; "The Constant, Sharp, and Unmistakable Borderlines between Literature and Art." Nearly all the examples of the clarification of the details of a text by a work of art, or vice versa, seem valid and valuable—the parallels between the symbolic animals of mediaeval sculpture and the *bestiaires*, the interpretation of Villon's *Ballade* for his mother through four paintings, the comparison of light effects in Racine and Claude Lorrain, the parallel between Rimbaud's "Mystique" and Gauguin's *Jacob Wrestling with the Angel*, to cite only a few. When one turns to the parallels classified under "Concept and Motif" there is more room for divergence of opinion. Many are inevitably somewhat obvious, merely illustrating the fact that artists and writers who are contemporaries frequently treat the same themes, for example the Napoleonic myth. In many cases, however, the similarities are deeper, and there are many excellent examples, ranging from the Frères de Limbourg and Charles d'Orléans to Maurice Denis and Claudel, of the way in which an attitude or a particular vision is translated by both an artist and a writer. Some of these parallels may well seem somewhat doubtful; to me those between Le Nain and Pascal, Watteau and Rousseau, Ingres and Lamartine, are of this kind. But they are few compared to the completely convincing ones.

It is when Professor Hatzfeld draws parallels between literary and artistic forms and techniques that I find him least convincing. There is indeed no doubt that certain formal principles which he discusses, such as minute realism or *beau désordre*, are common to both literature and art. But the parallel between the five-part division of the Romanesque tympanum and the structure of the *Chanson de Saint Alexis*, is of a different kind: "Since psychologists have discovered that five units are the maximum the eye can embrace, a *transposition d'art* accounts much better for the five units appearing in composition, strophes, and verse of the *Alexius* than any other symbolic or dramatic explanation" (p. 218). This seems to ignore fundamental differences, and to transform an artistic principle into a literary one, limiting literature by a spatial law. Again the parallel between Cézanne's ideals and the "Gautier-Baudelaire concept of art" (p. 191) seems to me somewhat forced, as does that between Juan Gris' *Chessboard* and Valéry's *Cimetière marin* (pp. 219-220). On this very delicate question of analogies between literary and artistic techniques Professor Hatzfeld goes a long way: "Further investigations may follow the line of interpretation of the rococo *forms* by such parallels as that between pastel and short sentences, and that between perspective in painting and narrative suspense" (p. 118).

At this point I regret Professor Hatzfeld's decision, stated in his preface, to exclude a "morphology of the arts" and general speculations on the relations between art and literature. He says that Etienne Souriau's *La Correspondance des arts* (1947) must be mentioned "for the surprising clarity and directness with which the author approaches in a general way a problem that will come up on every page of our book. Souriau formulates the problem in this way: 'What is the extent of resemblances, affinities and common laws between a statue and a painting, a sonnet and a vase, a cathedral and a symphony, and which are, at the same time, their differences which might be called congenital ones?' " Earlier in his preface Professor Hatzfeld says that the fundamental differences between the two modes of expression have been known since they were discussed in Lessing's *Laokoon* (1766), and in his conclusion he states that these laws are still valid. (One wishes that, in a book on French literature, Diderot had been given the credit he deserves for his earlier discussion of the problem, beginning with the *Lettre sur les sourds et muets* in 1751.) The problem comes up particularly in connection with certain cases in which painter and writer have treated the same theme: Chateaubriand's *Atala* and Girodet's *Burial of Atala,* Delacroix's *Massacres de Scio* and Hugo's "L'Enfant grec," Millet's *Sower* and Hugo's "Saison des semailles," among others. On all these, which are recapitulated in the section of the conclusion, "Borderlines between Literature and Art," Professor Hatzfeld has many excellent and penetrating remarks, which make one wish all the more that he had discussed the principles on which they are based.

I wish too that Professor Hatzfeld had considered at greater length the special problem of the *transposition d'art,* both as practiced by Gautier (to which there is a close parallel in the art of illustration), and the more interesting type, in which the work of art for the writer, the literary text for the artist, is merely a point of departure, and is transmuted and enriched by his own vision and imagination. Such is the case with Baudelaire's "Danse macabre" and "Le Masque," both inspired by statues by Christophe, and with Rodin's *Thinker,* suggested by two lines of Baudelaire's "Les Bijoux." And I cannot but regret that Professor Hatzfeld has deliberately restricted his comparisons to examples within the same epoch in history, thus excluding parallels that often indicate a deeper relationship than that of contemporaneity—the kind of kinship of which Henri Focillon writes: "Between masters who have never had the slightest personal acquaintance, and whom everything has kept apart—nature, distance, time—the life of forms establishes an intimate relationship" (*The Life of Forms in Art,* 1942, p. 62). It is perhaps not entirely fair to criticize Professor Hatzfeld for what are deliberate omissions. I believe, however, that some discussion of these points would not only have enriched the book but also have led the author to evaluate his parallels somewhat more critically, distinguishing those which are merely treatments of a common theme or expressions of a state of mind characteristic of a given period from those which are based on a significant relationship between artist and writer.

Certain general reservations can then be made about the book. One regrets that in his enthusiasm for his new approach Professor Hatzfeld has not seen or expressed its limitations as clearly as he might have. It is unfortunate too that he has not given more credit to the many writers who have prepared the way for his book, both by discussion of the general problem and by detailed studies of individual parallels, such as those of Jean Seznec on Flaubert and the arts. His own achievement is such that he could well afford such acknowledgement.

Professor Hatzfeld has fully justified the statement in his preface: "Literature and teaching literature make sense in an educational program only if literature is not made subservient to sociological, psychological, and pragmatic considerations —which is decidedly not the role of literature; its very *raison d'être* is refinement

and insight into that interior world which Pascal has defined as *esprit de finesse*. I know no better means to give literature, and particularly the leading foreign literature, this rank and importance than to conceive of it as an art to be enriched still further by a systematic comparison with the related pictorial art." No reader can lay down the book without having had his understanding of French literature broadened and deepened by this *promenade* through a combined museum and library, in the company of a guide who analyzes both pictures and texts in detail, with an admirable combination of historical knowledge and aesthetic appreciation. Professor Hatzfeld has fully realized the rich and varied possibilities of his approach and has explored them with imagination as well as with diligence. And the very fact that the book constantly raises questions in the reader's mind is the best possible proof that, besides being informative and illuminating, it is extraordinarily thought-provoking and suggestive.

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ON DRYDEN'S ESSAY OF DRAMATIC POESY. By Frank L. Huntley. University of Michigan Contributions in Modern Philology, No. 16. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1951. x, 71 p.

The aim of Mr. Huntley's work—one of the very few book-length pieces ever published on Dryden's criticism—is to analyze *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* and to show the organic unity of the piece by discussing the connections of the argument and the relevance of the various parts to the central purposes of the whole. There are, in addition, discussions of such matters as the Spanish sources, the identity of the speakers, and the connection between the *Essay* and the Preface to *Annus Mirabilis* and the *Defense* of *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*. The whole has carried out with infinite pains and in great detail, and the results are impressive.

The chief point on which one may wish to disagree with Mr. Huntley is the degree of conscious and careful planning which he sees in the *Essay*. According to Huntley, Dryden's aim in the *Essay* is to explore completely "the contrivance and writing of a play by examples in ancient and modern drama in order to determine which nation has the best" (p. 56) and "to reduce to a method through an imagined debate the rules by which drama has been written" (p. 20). In other words, to his avowed purpose of vindicating "the honour of our English writers, from the censure of those who unjustly prefer the French before them," Dryden adds the intention of giving a complete account of the art of the drama; the two purposes are linked by the fact that Dryden is "opposing the plays of one age to those of another in order to find a perfection" (p. 22). It seems to be Huntley's feeling that almost everything in the *Essay*—every paragraph and quotation, sometimes even the digressions and omissions—goes back to the conscious carrying out of one of these purposes, that each part of the argument is written with one eye not only on what has gone before but on what is to come after, and that there is little or none of that casual digressiveness and indifference to strictly logical organization which appear in many of Dryden's prefaces and which have seemed to be present in the *Essay*. It is in relating certain parts of the *Essay* to the second purpose—that of exploring completely the contrivance and writing of a play—that Huntley becomes especially elaborate in his explanations. Thus he regards the final section on rime not as an appendix or separate argument but as a filling out of the theory of the drama by a discussion of style, a topic neglected in the first two rounds of the debate; and he thinks that the shortness of the section on rime as compared to the first two parts "is that demanded by the temporary

opposition of invention and disposition [covered in Parts I and II] to elocution [covered in Part III]" (p. 23). (He also speaks of the section on rime as if it were a debate for and against modern writing and in this way also supplementary to the first two parts; but actually the two kinds of writing here contrasted are both used by the moderns.) Elsewhere it is implied that Lisideius' emphasis on the unity of action is intended to make up for Eugenius' neglect of the subject and that his neglect of the humors does not matter because Neander will take care of them (pp. 37, 39). This tendency to elaborate explanation also appears in the analysis of the polemic aspect of the *Essay*. Thus it is said that one function of the "characters" of Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Jonson "is to give Neander's reasons for choosing Jonson's *Silent Woman* as the best English play to prove his first affirmation" (p. 46), even though these reasons are given by Neander before he embarks on the characters. Elsewhere we are told that one reason why Lisideius' definition of a play was made *a genere et fine* was to give an opening for Neander's analogy between tragedy and epic in his discussion of rime (p. 55), although it is not easy to see how a definition giving the characteristics which distinguish drama from other arts would have spoiled Neander's argument. These are extreme examples; but there is much of the same sort of thing all through the book.

There is this much to be said for Huntley's assumption of a dual purpose and a painstaking planning in the details—the theory hangs together and almost everything in the *Essay* can be explained in terms of it. Thus, although Eugenius' description of the four parts of a play does not contribute much to his argument for the moderns, it does have point if Dryden is giving a complete account of the art of the drama. My own feeling, however, is that the *Essay* was written in a much more careless and casual fashion. Dryden is not accustomed to take much pains with the planning of his critical essays; the Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, one of the most systematic, breaks off in the middle of the argument, and even in the massive Dedication of the *Aeneis* Dryden says that he is writing in a "loose epistolary way" and that he will take up and lay down the same subject as often as he pleases. Certainly Dryden's statements about the *Essay* do not suggest that he labored over it; to him it is an "incorrect essay," a "little discourse" found among his "loose papers," "rude and undigested," written "without the help of books, or advice of friends," mingling many things "in the freedom of discourse," and definitely not intended "to teach others an art which they understand much better than" himself.

Moreover, Dryden appears to be confused on the fundamental question of the intent of the *Essay*. It would seem from the preliminary remarks of Eugenius and the conclusion of Neander's first speech that Dryden wished to assert that the Restoration drama, though inferior to the Elizabethan, still surpassed the ancient drama and the modern continental. This proposition, which has aroused the patriotic indignation of Legouis and is indeed quite unreasonable, seems to be forgotten in the middle of the *Essay*, where all the examples are taken from the Elizabethan stage and the argument is managed as if it were enough to prove that any Englishman, of any age, had done superior work. Neander's explanation for omitting any detailed discussion of his contemporaries, for whose abilities he is making the most extravagant claims, is a lame one and was perhaps slipped in by Dryden to cover up his confusion of intent, which must have become evident to him when he tried to draw the argument to a conclusion. Some slight confusion might be expected in the complicated balancing of Ancient against Modern, Elizabethan against Restoration, English against French, and the *Essay* is really not much injured by it; but if there is some lack of clarity in the main issue, it is hard to believe that there is careful planning in the details. Actually, of course, one does not have to accept or reject Huntley's analysis *in toto*. Even

if we do not accept his assumption that Dryden intended to make a systematic exposition of the laws of the drama, we can grant that the *Essay* reflects his interest in these laws and that most of the important problems do come in at one time or another; and if we are not willing to see as much planning in the *Essay* as Huntley sees, we may grant that there is more than meets the eye of a casual reader.

This book is full of interesting and acute observations on various aspects of Dryden's criticism—in the *Essay* and elsewhere. To give only a few examples: Huntley shows how the characters of Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Jonson are arranged to give a movement from pure nature through nature with judgment to pure judgment; how the two parts of the *Defense* are united around the concept of the imitation of nature; and how the two bad poets mentioned at the beginning illustrate, negatively, the two qualities of justness and liveliness which Lisideius will later demand in his definition of a play. Huntley notes Dryden's conception of "drama as rhetoric, in the sense of persuading, influencing, or moving a particular audience by means of language" (p. 68); this point is an important one, since it explains certain notions in Dryden which might otherwise be set down as evidence of romanticism or relativism. Finally, Huntley asserts the essential unity of Dryden's dramatic criticism—a point which cannot be too often made. The book is rich in observations such as these. It ought to be read and reread by anyone who has more than an undergraduate's interest in Dryden's criticism.

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DIE AUFNAHME DER ENGLISCHEN UND AMERIKANISCHEN LITERATUR IN DER DEUTSCHEN SCHWEIZ VON 1800-1830. By Emil Graf. Zürich: Juris Verlag, n.d. 127 p.

It is always informative to investigate the reception of foreign literature and foreign thought by leading native poets. In Switzerland, however, no leading native poets existed around 1820; for, after the great international significance of Swiss literature during the age of preromanticism (Bodmer, Haller, Gessner, Rousseau), the romantic period proper produced no freely creative authors (we hesitate, for a variety of reasons, to mention Zschokke, Mme de Staël, or Constant as exceptions), and one had to wait until the age of realism before Swiss letters came to the fore again (Gotthelf, Keller, Rod, Chiesa).

Any study of the reception of English and American literatures in German Switzerland from 1800 to 1830 was therefore doomed to an investigation of echoes in Swiss literary periodicals of the type of *Der Schweizerbote, Literarisches Archiv der Akademie Bern, Wöchentliche Unterhaltungsblätter für Welt- und Menschenkunde, Alpenrosen, Isis, Schweizerische Monatschronik*, etc. The yeoman work of assembling all traces that could be found in scholarly or popular essays, book reviews, or even newspaper advertisements, Mr. Graf has done in a very conscientious and competent fashion. His findings are voluminous, but rather mediocre from a qualitative viewpoint, as was to be expected. To compensate for this mediocrity of results he also includes brief chapters on English or American historians, philosophers, scientists, travelers, theologians, economists, biographers, etc., in order to demonstrate the variety and the amazing popularity of English and, to a lesser extent, of American books in Switzerland.

Foremost among the English poets read in Switzerland were Scott and Byron; Shelley is not mentioned at all by Graf, and Carlyle is given less than two lines.

Among American periodicals most appreciated abroad was the *North American Review*, and among the authors, Cooper and Irving; occasionally Barlow, Brown, Dunlap, Webster, Madison, Dwight, Pike, etc. were also referred to. In a third chapter Mr. Graf enumerates references to, and translations of, older English authors, from Shakespeare and Milton to Shaftesbury, Lillo, Johnson, and Burns. In the fourth chapter he surveys the German and Swiss intermediaries who contributed most to the popularity of certain Anglo-Saxon authors, especially Johann Valentin Adrian, the translator of Byron; Samuel Heinrich Spiker, the translator of Irving and Scott; Karl Friedrich Ludwig Kannegiesser, the translator of Chaucer, Beaumont, Fletcher, Scott, and Byron (and Dante); and Johann Christian Hüttner, interpreter at the Foreign Office and literary contributor to many German periodicals. The chief Swiss publisher to encourage English works was Sauerländer in Aarau, though older firms such as Orell and Gessner in Zürich (the publisher of the first two German translations of Shakespeare) should not be forgotten.

With regard to format and presentation, it is to be regretted that both author and publisher seem to have conspired to make this dissertation look as unattractive and dry as possible. The style is staccato and enumerative; exasperatingly diminutive paragraphs from one to five lines seem to be the rule. Full bibliographical references are squeezed into the midst of German participial constructions—an unnecessarily complicated way of presenting factual information. Mr. Graf might also have enlivened his dissertation if, instead of the nine lines at the very end, he had given us a clear and well-written summary (possibly accompanied by some charts) of the salient results of his effort to cast light upon a little-known aspect of Anglo-Swiss literary relations.

W. P. F.

RONSARD, L'HOMME ET L'OEUVRE. By Raymond Lebègue. Connaissance des Lettres, No. 29. Paris: Boivin, 1950. 173 p.

The present volume, written by one of the leading authorities on the French Renaissance, reminds us again of the existence and the usefulness of the Connaissance des Lettres series, which was originally founded by Paul Hazard and is now being continued under the editorship of René Jasinski. Dedicated almost exclusively to the investigation of French literary figures, the series presents fine summarizing sketches or *états présents des travaux*, which are addressed to students, professors, and the cultured reading public at the same time. *Ronsard* is a masterful condensation of the essential facts, making use of all previous studies and, in its brevity and conciseness, bringing into much clearer focus many sides of Ronsard which are too often disregarded through a one-sided emphasis on his various *Amours*. Ronsard's life and works are closely intermixed in Professor Lebègue's presentation, with discussions of sources and metre, various critical interpretations, and a select bibliography (pp. 168-173) which adds to the value of the thirteen chapters. Chapter VI, on Ronsard's attitude toward the Reformation, and Chapter XIII, an excellent summing up of his poetic qualities, call for special mention.

The comparatist will naturally be most interested in the pages indicating what Ronsard received from and gave to foreign authors. The greatest lyric poet of France before the age of romanticism is one of the best illustrations of how a poet of genius, dominating the innumerable foreign influences noticeable in him, transforms into gold whatever foreign values he may have absorbed. Horace, Virgil, Homer, Pindar, Anacreon, Ovid, among the ancients; Petrarch, Ariosto,

Bembo, among the Italians; and Johannes Secundus, Pontano, Navagero, among the Neo-Latin poets—these were particularly influential. Comparatists with a flair for individual literary *genres* will note with great interest Ronsard's pioneering role in the history of the French ode, hymn, and dithyramb. His extensive Greek studies, exceptional for his century, have been given deserved attention.

Of the influences emanating from Ronsard, Lebègue speaks in Chapter XI of his posthumous fame in France (indifference from Malherbe to La Harpe, and the juster appreciation which set in with French romanticism) and abroad (pp. 123-138). England contracts an important debt, not only because of Ronsard's contact with Queen Elizabeth and Mary Stuart, but because the Pléiade served as one of the chief transmitters of Petrarchism during the Elizabethan Age. The Germany of Melissus, Weckherlin, and Opitz, the Italy of Chiabrera, and the Poland of Kochanowski likewise profited greatly from the French school headed by Ronsard; only Spain seems to have escaped its influence. My only criticism of this excellent summary of Ronsard's place in literature is connected with details of this chapter. I should hesitate to call the French influence upon Elizabethan lyricism greater than Italian influence, unless we disregard those Italian influences that reached England through French intermediaries; I should like more than two and a half lines referring to the very significant influence of Ronsard (and du Bellay) upon the Dutch poets; and Weckherlin's rendering of "Mignonne, allons voir" was an honest translation, and not a "plagiarism."

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